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**THE MAP THAT IS  
HALF UNROLLED**

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THE WITCH-DOCTOR

# THE MAP THAT IS HALF UNROLLED

EQUATORIAL AFRICA FROM THE  
INDIAN OCEAN TO THE ATLANTIC

BY  
E. ALEXANDER POWELL

WITH MANY ILLUSTRATIONS  
FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
REXFORD W. BARTON  
AND THE AUTHOR



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■

*To*

WILLIAM GIBSON GALLOWHUR, Esq.

Dear Will:

You have seen me off on so many of my journeys to the Far Places, and have so often greeted me on my return, and when in America I have always found so warm a welcome awaiting me from you and Bess at "The Hedges," that I trust you will accept the dedication of this book as a slight token of my gratitude.

Your cousin,

E. ALEXANDER POWELL.

St. Jean-de-Luz,  
Basses Pyrénées,  
June, 1925.

■



## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Writing an acknowledgment to a book, particularly to a book of travel, is like sending out Christmas cards; with the best intentions in the world one is prone to overlook somebody who has shown him kindness and whom he wishes to remember. And it is particularly difficult to remember all of those to whom I became indebted during so extended a journey as that narrated in the following pages.

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For the exceptional facilities granted me for travel and investigation in the Belgian Congo I am under the deepest obligations to his Excellency

Baron de Cartier de Marchienne, Belgian Ambassador to the United States; to M. Louis Franck, formerly Belgian Minister of the Colonies; to his Excellency M. Rutten, Governor-General of the Belgian Congo; to Millard Shaler, Esq., of the Société Internationale Forestière et Minière du Congo; to the directors of the Compagnie des Chemins de Fer du Congo Supérieur aux Grands Lacs Africains, the Société Nationale des Transports Fluviaux au Congo, and the Société Maritime du Congo Belge; and to numerous local officials—governors, administrators, district commissioners—all the way from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic.

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In British territory I met with the greatest kindness from his Excellency Sir Horace Hyatt, K.C.M.G., Governor of the Tanganyika Territory; C. Gilman, Esq., F.R.G.S., of the Tanganyika Railways; and from other British officials.

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Nor would I fail to express my appreciation of the unfailing kindness and helpfulness of my friend and traveling companion, Rexford W. Barton, Esq., who took the majority of the pictures used in the following pages.

This is the second volume of a trilogy dealing with modern Africa. The first, "Beyond the Utmost Purple Rim," an account of Abyssinia and Madagascar, appeared in the early spring of the present year. The third, "In Barbary," will be published, I hope, in the not far distant future.

E. ALEXANDER POWELL.

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**THE MAP THAT IS  
HALF UNROLLED**



# THE MAP THAT IS HALF UNROLLED

## CHAPTER I

### I SPEAK OF AFRICA AND GOLDEN JOYS

**H**OW clearly I remember my boyish disappointment when first I saw him. I had drawn a mental picture of a slim, debonair, romantic figure, tanned by the sun to the color of a much-used saddle. With the naïveté of youth I had envisioned him in the tropical garments and peaked white cap made so familiar by his photographs. Instead I saw a thick-set, broad-shouldered man, with steely, dominating eyes and prematurely whitened hair, whose manner was so modest and unassuming as almost to suggest embarrassment. And, as though that were not enough, he wore the orthodox evening-dress of civilization. He might have been a banker or a lawyer or a successful business man. I was sorry that I had come. But before he had spoken

a dozen sentences my initial disappointment was forgotten, wiped out by the sheer magic of the scenes he so vividly depicted, the astounding adventures which he so simply told. Gone now was the brilliant audience, gone the great auditorium, gone the prosaic figure on the stage. No longer was I sitting in a red plush opera-stall, surrounded by complacent, well-dressed people, but, transported to a continent half the world away, I was toiling through steaming jungles at the head of a long file of naked porters . . . palavering with the chieftains of strange inland tribes . . . dynamiting the rocks which barred our passage down nameless rivers . . . fighting off savages who showered us with poisoned arrows . . . chopping a laborious way through black primeval forests where unseen perils lurked on every hand. . . . Who was this man who thus enthralled my youthful imagination, you ask? It was Henry M. Stanley.

From that memorable evening, when I heard from Stanley's own lips the story of his historic march across Africa, I dreamed of some day traversing the continent by the trail which he had blazed. But it was ordained that years should







pass before my dream came true, though in the interim destiny and duty led me to the shores of Africa many times. It was my good fortune to know Morocco in those mad, bad days when captured pretenders to the Sherceefian throne were exhibited about the country in cages lashed to the backs of camels, when the kaiser threatened the peace of the world by despatching the *Panther* to Agadir, and when Roosevelt rudely shook the sultan from his apathy by his demand for "Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead." As a consular officer in Egypt I watched the struggle between the young khedive, Abbas Hilmi, who nominally ruled the Nile land from his palace of Abdin and that grim old man, Lord Cromer, who really ruled it from the British residency. I was in the equatorial provinces of the Sudan when the bloody excesses of the Mahdi were recent memories and Kitchener's was still a name to conjure with. With the Camel Corps I crossed the Western Desert and rode with the *chasseur d'Afrique* patrols along the fringes of the Sahara. In East Africa I followed the German railway-builders to the end of steel. From Beira, on the Indian Ocean littoral, I journeyed across Mozambique,

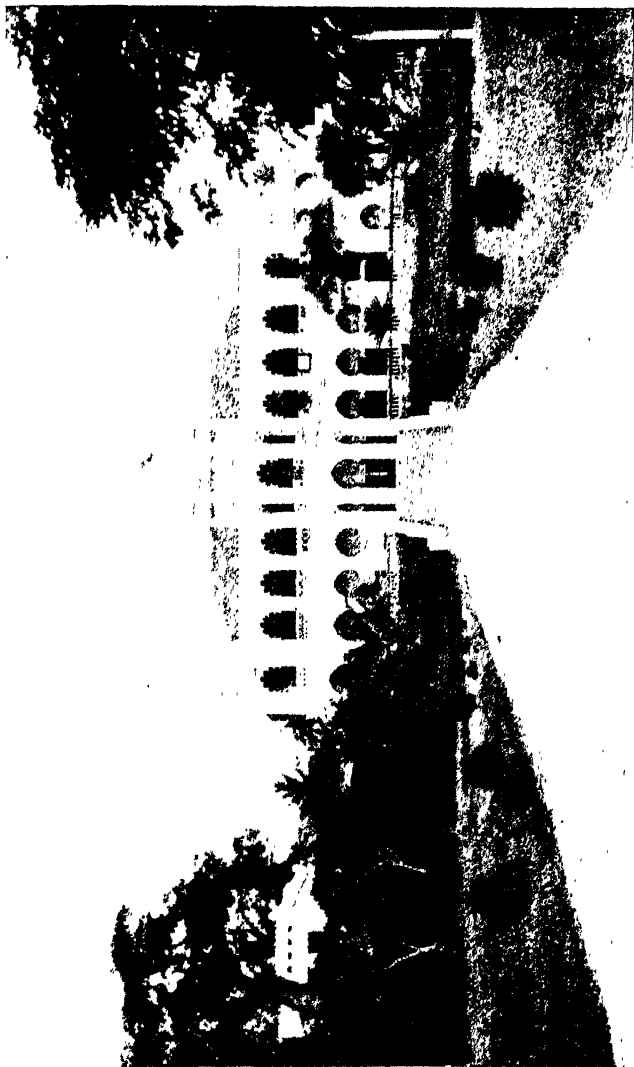
Mashonaland, and the country of the Matabele to the Zambesi and beyond. I was at home in every club and consulate from Tangier to Table Bay. But I was not content. I had only nibbled at the edges of the continent. I felt as though I had hacked at a log without cutting it through. It was not, indeed, until the Great Pathfinder had been sleeping for many years in a quiet English churchyard that circumstances permitted me to embark on that transcontinental journey of which I had dreamed.

After a visit to Abyssinia and a journey across Madagascar, the early spring of 1924 found me, with Mrs. Powell and a friend, Mr. Rexford W. Barton, at Zanzibar, with the African mainland, mysterious, alluring, thirty miles away. The appeal made by that palm-fringed shore-line beyond the narrow channel was too strong to be denied. The east-to-west trek across the continent from the Indian Ocean to the Congo's mouth, which had appeared so formidable an undertaking when contemplated from New York and London, now seemed a comparatively simple matter. Traversing a region three thousand miles in width, whose forests, swamps, and jungles had yet to be spanned

by the iron highway or the copper wire, where a handful of white men were waging a war for civilization against terrific odds, it was a journey which offered fascinating possibilities, which made an irresistible appeal to the imagination. That it was practicable, the British, French, and Belgian colonial offices already had assured me, though as to the conditions we should encounter or the length of time it would require they were exceedingly vague. But their assurances sufficed. I was prepared for difficulties and discomforts, for dangers even, but I wanted to be certain that the road was there. For I was not picturing myself in the rôle of an explorer, mind you, or a pioneer. I was—and am—merely an inveterate traveler, content to follow by the trails that bolder men have blazed; a professional onlooker with an insatiable curiosity to see for myself those distant seaboard and mysterious hinterlands which comparatively few white men have seen.

When I am at home I am forever meeting people who tell me that the fascination which these savage countries hold for some of us is to them utterly incomprehensible; they cannot understand why any normal human being should willingly

leave the safety and cleanliness and comforts of civilization to visit them. They have read of sun-stroke and fevers and sleeping-sickness, of head-hunters and cannibals, of snakes and insects whose bite means death, of heat and sweat and dirt. Do we, they demand incredulously, actually *enjoy* these things? But, though every traveler speaks of the dangers, difficulties, and discomforts which he has experienced, and sometimes, it must be confessed, lays undue emphasis upon them—probably because every man likes to appear as something of a hero to the folks at home—it is not the disagreeable incidents which stick in the memory, when all is said and done, but the pleasant ones. We forget the stifling heat of the jungle in recalling the blessed coolness of nights on breezes swept uplands. The memory of the long and weary treks across scorching sands or through steaming bush pales before the recollection of the evenings spent around the leaping camp-fire, with the great black forest lying hushed behind us and the great black river swirling at our feet. We dream of riding with a loose rein across rolling, grassy plains with purple mountains rising in the distance and the



THE SEAT OF BRITISH POWER IN TANGANYIKA  
The palace of the governor at Dar-es-Salaam





sky like an inverted bright blue bowl; of care-free days on lazy, palm-fringed rivers, with the voices of the paddlers raised in some barbaric chorus as the dugout sweeps along; of the joys of loitering about distant seaports, mingling with strange peoples, listening to strange tales, whiffing curious, spicy smells.

When I set out for Africa I anticipated neither hair-breadth escapes nor great adventures; nor did I have any, at least in the African meaning of the term. Adventures, as Stefansson, the arctic explorer, has said, are a mark of incompetence. They are nearly always due to ignorance of the conditions one is to encounter and to a lack of preparation. It is not necessary to go to Africa to have adventures. You can find them almost anywhere if you deliberately set out to seek them. Trouble—which is only another name for adventure—is always lurking around the corner waiting for him who is looking for it.

I sought, rather, strange scenes and experiences new. I wanted to stand on that spot by the shore of Tanganyika where the great missionary-statesman, and the indomitable explorer who was sent to find him, so dramatically met; to follow in the

footsteps of Tippoo Tib and his "black ivory" runners; to push the nose of my dugout up steaming, jungle-bordered streams where hippopotamuses wallowed amid the papyrus and crocodiles basked on the sand-bars; to see the bepainted and befeathered witch-doctors performing their fantastic rites; to know the awful solitude of the tropic bush; to watch the naked blacks leaping and whirling to the thunder of the tom-toms in some fire-illuminated forest clearing; to float for day after day, week after week, down dark, mysterious rivers with the ghosts of the great pathfinders to bear me company.

I realized, moreover, that this was the last call. For Africa, as some of us have known her, is changing rapidly. Civilization is striding across the continent in seven-league boots. No longer do

Geographers, in Afric maps,  
With savage pictures fill their gaps,  
And o'er uninhabitable downs  
Place elephants for want of towns.

Within the memory of most of us the hinterland of Africa held deserts that were uncrossed, forests unexplored, tribes undiscovered, rivers unnamed. But to-day every desert has been trav-

ersed, not only by caravan but by motor-car and airplane. To-day we have surveyed the forests and estimated the number of board feet they contain. We have traced the courses of the rivers and named them and set them down upon our maps. We are familiar with nearly every African tribe, its habitat, language, and customs. And, barring Abyssinia, nearly every foot of territory on the continent has passed under the control of some European nation as colony, protectorate, or mandate.

To speak of "Brightest Africa," as one enthusiast has done, is to take a very considerable liberty with the truth, for, if no longer dark, it is still dim, very dim, in spots. But it is rapidly brightening. The king of Uganda—grandson of that Mtesa to whose court Stanley appealed for missionaries to be sent—is an enthusiastic tennis-player, has built in the outskirts of his capital a golf course, and burns up the roads in a low-slung racing-car. Radios crackle along the Luabala. The Zulus are taking to store-clothes and straw hats. The natives of Equatoria fashion their simple garments on American sewing-machines. The Arab dancing-girls of the Saha-

was like going back to a hotel where one had been badly treated to find that a new management had taken charge and that the whole policy had changed.

In German days the streets of Dar-es-Salaam swarmed with soldiery, native and European, every man bearing witness, in his exaggeratedly stiff carriage and parade-step gait, to the handiwork of the Prussian *Feldwebel*. There are still plenty of uniforms to be seen, it is true, but now they are worn by the extremely smart-looking Tanganyika Police or the *askari* of the K. A. R.—the King's African Rifles—perhaps the best disciplined and most efficient black troops in the world. On the terrace of the club, instead of the crop-haired, bull-necked German officers, their red jowls bulging above their high white collars, who sprawled in their chairs and growled "*Was ist?*" and "*Ja wohl*" and stared insolently at strangers through their monocles, now lounge slim, pleasant-mannered Englishmen, civil officials and business men for the most part, who hospitably push the visitor into an arm-chair and press upon him a tall glass with ice tinkling in it. And when, at sunset, the native band plays its final number, one

risers to "God Save the King" instead of "Die Wacht am Rhein."

To those who have not previously visited the less civilized portions of the continent it is a thrilling moment when the ship glides at half-speed through the narrow, dangerous passage, past the rust-red wreck of the *Koenig*, with which the Germans sought to block the channel, and emerges into Dar-es-Salaam's spacious, land-locked harbor. For this is the vestibule to adventure, the gateway to primitive, savage, unspoiled Africa. The yellow beach with its fringe of feathery palms and flowering acacias; the squat, square buildings, their white walls and corrugated iron roofs irradiating heat; the round, thatched native huts; the wall of bright green jungle just beyond—these are Africa, so long the continent of mystery and darkness, so long the cradle of the unknown. Africa changes little, and this coast must have looked the same to the early Arabs, creeping up in their cumbersome dhows with the scarlet flag of Oman flaunting from the stern; the same to the daring Portuguese sea-rovers who took and made Mombasa and Zanzibar and other towns along the littoral; the same

to Speke and Burton and Stanley and all the old explorers, when they beheld that mysterious shore-line and speculated on the secrets that lay hidden behind it.

Until the colonial empire which the Germans had so painstakingly built up was abolished by a stroke of the pen in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, Dar-es-Salaam was the capital and *chef-lieu* of German East Africa, and in its development and beautification the kaiser's Government poured out money like beer. It was the show-place of Deutschland über Meer, to which every patriotic Teuton could point with justifiable pride as a proof of the colonizing genius of the sons of the Fatherland. When the German does things he usually does them thoroughly, and, spurred by a determination to surpass his great rival, England, he did his best at Dar-es-Salaam, and, indeed, throughout the colony, not even the public improvements instituted by the American Government in the Philippines and on the Canal Zone being more substantially constructed or better adapted to tropical conditions.

When the twenty white men who formed the first German expedition landed on this coast in



IN THE NATIVE TOWN, DAR-ES-SALAAM

When the Germans landed here in 1887 this was a miasmal swamp; this is what they left when they evacuated the place less than thirty years later





1887, they found a few thousand natives and a score or so of Arabs dwelling in wretched huts between the edge of a miasmal jungle and the sea. When they evacuated the place less than thirty years later they left behind them a modern city with broad and shady avenues, a waterfront lined with handsome government offices and substantially built warehouses, two imposing churches which would attract attention anywhere, an up-to-the-minute hospital for the study and treatment of tropical diseases, a line club, the best hotel between Alexandria and Durban, and, of course, the inevitable brewery.

The swamps had been drained, the encroaching jungle driven back, and the fever-bearing mosquito, which is the curse of this coast, brought under control. Dar-es-Salaam was, in short, a bit of the Fatherland, or as nearly so as German architects could make it while allowing for tropical conditions, set down on the seaboard of the Dark Continent. For "they change their skies above them, but not their hearts, who roam."

Indeed, so characteristically German is the town's appearance despite its tropical setting that, looking out from the veranda of my hotel upon its

formal, tree-lined avenues, its Gothic spires and gables and steep-pitched, red-tiled roofs, I found it hard to convince myself that I was not in, say, Düsseldorf, rather than an African city within a few degrees of the Line. And a like transformation, though on a smaller scale, of course, was wrought elsewhere in the colony—at Tanga, Morogoro, Tabora, Kigoma, Ujiji. No fair-minded person, no matter how bitter his animosity toward the Germans and their methods, can withhold his admiration for what they accomplished in East Africa, which, propaganda to the contrary, they left immeasurably better than they found it.

To my way of thinking, Dar-es-Salaam, while historically uninteresting, is the most attractive town in all East Africa, though some might give the palm to its older and more sophisticated sister, Zanzibar, on its clove island, thirty miles away. Very beautiful is the place in its brilliant tropical fashion. So vivid are its colors—the peacock-tinted waters of the harbor, the yellow beach, the whole gamut of greens in the amazingly luxuriant vegetation, the bright red roads, the magenta masses of bougainvillea, the coral roofs and white-washed walls of the buildings, the white or many-

hued garments of the natives, the hot sky of cobalt blue—that it looks as unreal as those fascinating places depicted on the flaming posters which one sees on the walls of European railway-stations.

The bulk of the natives of Dar-es-Salaam are Swahilis, the designation applied to the indigenous population of that portion of the East African littoral lying between Italian Somaliland and Portuguese territory. Bishop Brown, writing in 1870 in regard to the derivation of the name, says: “The natives themselves jestingly derive it from ‘*Sawa hila*,’ which a Zanzibar interpreter would explain as ‘All same cheat.’ It is more probably derived, however, from the Arabic *sawahili*, meaning ‘coast,’ so the real significance of the term Swahili is ‘coast people.’ ”<sup>1</sup>

The Swahilis cannot be regarded as a nation, however, nor even as a distinct race, but rather as a mixed breed, generally of Bantu stock, whose negroid characteristics have been somewhat modified by a strain of Arab blood. The chief characteristics of the Swahili are his adaptability and

<sup>1</sup> See “From Ruwenzori to the Congo,” by A. F. R. Wollaston.

imitativeness. Hence, he has found no difficulty in adjusting himself to the varied conditions which have been imposed on the East Coast by successive waves of invasion. He has served faithfully in turn the Arabs, the Portuguese, the Germans, and the British. He will wear the shirt and trousers of the West or the turban and flowing robe of the East. He will join lustily in "Nearer, My God, to Thee" or chant in singsong monotone the *surahs* of the Koran. He will get gloriously drunk on European gin or will observe with utmost scrupulousness the tenets laid down by Mohammed. The trusted lieutenants of Tippoo Tib on his terrible slave-raids into the interior were Swahilis, and it was Livingstone's devoted Swahili servants who, after the death of the great missionary-explorer in Central Africa, brought his body down to the coast. The Swahilis are a loyal, light-hearted, laughter-loving race, in which respects they greatly resemble the American negro, and like him they make excellent house-servants. Indeed, the white man of the East Coast could hardly get along without them.

The universal dress of the men is the *kanka*, a long and always immaculately white garment,



#### THE VESTIBULE OF ADVENTURE

Dar-es-Salaam has always been the gateway through which civilization, commerce, and Christianity have entered the Dark Continent



reaching from neck to heels, which looks like a nightgown. On the head is worn a white skull-cap, often of open-work heavily embroidered, or a tarboosh, or, more rarely, a turban. The sole garment of a Swahili woman consists of a length of the vividly colored calico known as "Amerikani," which she winds tightly about her body under the arms, drawing the loose end over one shoulder. The more shrieking these cottons are the more chic the wearer. The ultra-modish ones resemble displays of fireworks—stars, pin-wheels, and bursting rockets stamped on red, blue, or yellow grounds. The elaborate coiffures achieved by the women would defy the skill of a court hair-dresser, their kinky wool being plaited into a series of tight little rows, extending from the brow to the back of the head, like miniature plow-furrows. As it takes the better part of a day and the assistance of a friend to dress a Swahili damsel's hair, she preserves it as long as possible by using, in lieu of a pillow, a wooden block hollowed to fit the neck.

Although, as I have remarked, the Swahilis are not a nation, they possess a language of their own which has become the *lingua franca* of Central

Africa. It is the polite tongue of nearly every native race of the equatorial regions, its acquirement being considered a mark of culture and standing among the inland tribes; it will carry a man from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic; and it is frequently used by Europeans of different nationalities in conversing with each other.

Running through all my memories of Dar-es-Salaam is a vivid recollection of the all-pervading, soaking, suffocating heat; a heat that, save for a brief hour at twilight, when the blessed sea-breeze gently blows, permeates the glaring days and drenches the velvet, fragrant nights, for nightfall brings no perceptible lowering of the temperature. Yet it is not the actual heat which makes life so unendurable during the hot season, for I have lived with comparative comfort in several places where the mercury climbs much higher. It is the appalling humidity that really matters. You sleep, or attempt to sleep, in an atmosphere resembling the steam-room of a Turkish bath, and when you arise in the morning, leaving the damp impress of yourself upon the bed, you feel as moist and limp as though you had been immersed in a tub and then run through a wringer. 'Twixt

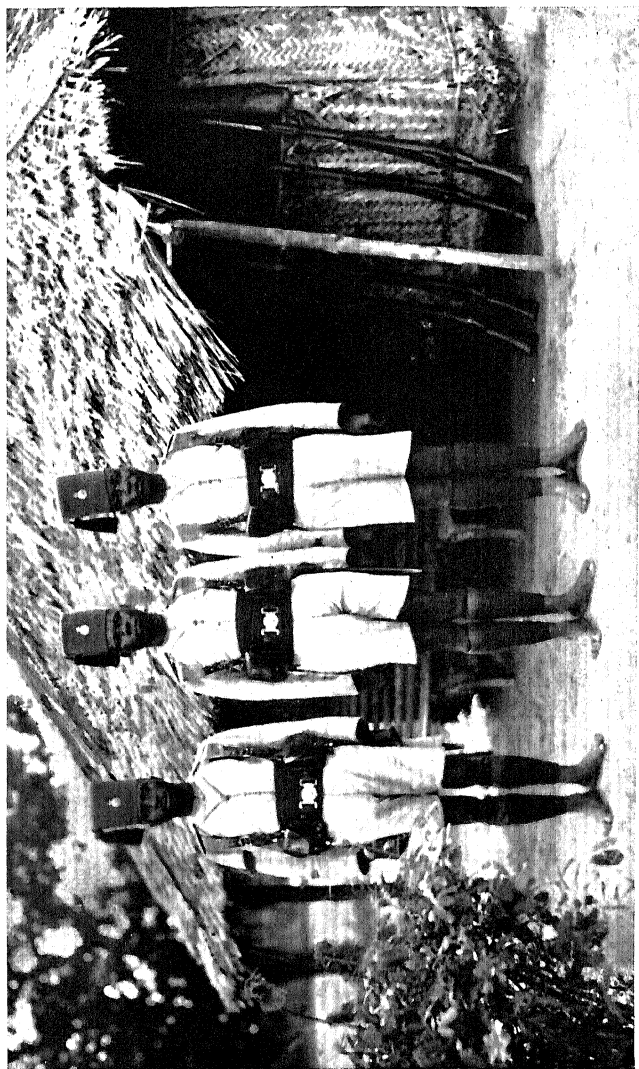


then and nightfall you must make a complete change of garments at least thrice if you are to maintain your self-respect and a respectable appearance, for even the mildest exertion drenches you to the skin with perspiration. Lean back for five minutes in a chair and when you arise there has spread between the shoulders of your jacket a damp, unsightly stain. But heat that will wilt an American, turn a Latin into a beach-comber, and make a Teuton look like a beefsteak wrapped up in a wet rag, has no effect on the appearance of an Englishman. Neatness of appearance under all conditions is a shibboleth with the English; it seems to be an inherent characteristic of the race. Just as the British officers would emerge from the filth of the Flanders trenches with their boots gleaming like mahogany and their fawn-colored breeches as spotless as though fresh from Savile Row, so the British in East Africa manage to look aggravatingly spruce and cool when the mercury is hovering around 120 in the shade.

A year or so ago there was produced on the American stage a play called "White Cargo." It purported realistically to depict conditions at a British post in West Africa. All the characters

were Englishmen. They had not shaved for weeks. Their garments looked as though they had been slept in by a stoker. The bungalow where the action took place reeked with squalor. That play gave the thousands of people who paid to see it a grossly erroneous idea of life in British Equatorial Africa. The colonial Englishman has numerous shortcomings, but personal untidiness is distinctly not one of them.

Wherever the Englishman goes he takes the forms and amenities of English social life with him, just as he takes his inborn love of sport. With him, in fact, sport usually treads hard on the heels of duty. Promptly at four o'clock he quits work, closes his office, and, changing into flannels, takes a rickshaw out to the Sports Club, where, during the two hours that remain before the coming of the brief tropical twilight, he sedulously devotes himself to tennis or golf. In playing golf at Dar-es-Salaam I could never rid myself of the feeling that I had trespassed on the training-quarters of a circus, for birds of gorgeous plumage flash amid the trees, and the grass on the fairways is kept down by a couple of domesticated zebras and a small herd of camels. If you have



TANGANYIKA "ASKARI"

These smart and efficient soldiers are recruited from the fighting tribes of the East African hinterland



any instructions for the black, barefooted youngsters in white night-shirts and red fezzes who tote your clubs you address then in Swahili, though I discovered that all of them were familiar with those vigorous Anglo-Saxon terms which imply irritation and disapproval.

At eleven minutes after six the profound, terrifying African night descends like the drop-curtain of a theater. Then the highways are suddenly a-twinkle with the lanterns of the rickshaws as every one hastens home to change for dinner. I have heard Americans sneer at the Englishman's insistence on getting into evening-clothes whatever his surroundings, but those who have lived in the African tropics well know that there is nothing like a stiff shirt-front to revive a fagged body and bolster up a drooping spirit.

There was comparatively little dinner-giving among the English in Dar-es-Salaam when we were there because of the meagerness of their pay and the high cost of living. Instead their hospitality took the form of innumerable "sundowners." A "sundowner," I should explain, is simply a polite drinking-party. For in Africa, for reasons of health and business, there is com-

paratively little drinking until the sun has gone down. There are no theaters or concerts or movies in Dar-es-Salaam, no evening amusements of any kind in fact, and so the "sundowners" usually last from seven until nine, for no one dines until very late. Arrived at the bungalow of your host, you find your fellow-guests gathered in a large, discreetly lighted room, the women in low-necked, filmy gowns, and the men in white mess-jackets. The windows are closely screened against the voracious African mosquitos and a fictitious coolness is created by the *punkahs* swinging lazily overhead. On a long table are siphons, bowls of cracked ice, a great variety of highly seasoned *hors d'œuvres*, and an amazing array of bottles bearing labels that were familiar to most Americans before the Great Drouth began.

The English confined themselves to whisky and soda in the main, but, they always insisted that we should mix cocktails for ourselves, the cocktail being regarded abroad as the American national drink. But when I produced a very creditable Bronx some one invariably would exclaim, "Oh, I say, that is n't a cocktail; that's a gin and bitters." For according to East African ideas

a cocktail implies a weird concoction composed of various liqueurs and syrups; the more the better. One of our hosts introduced us to a drink which he called a Sabbath Calm. The ingredients consisted of milk, the yolk of an egg, sugar, cura-Cao, cherry bandy, and rum, but when I asked him how he mixed them he replied that the proportions varied, depending upon the mood that he was in. By way of reciprocity, I taught him how to make a Whisper of Death, the secret of which had been imparted to me by a government medical officer in British North Borneo.

They were very pleasant, these little gatherings of well-bred, well-dressed people in their settings of cretonne-covered furniture, shaded lights, and flowers. Had it not been for the silent-footed Swahili servants in their white skullcaps and snowy *kanzas* girt with scarlet sashes, and the heavy fragrance of hibiscus and frangipani which drifted in through the open windows, we might have been at a country-house on the north shore of Long Island. But the conversation was all of Africa: of a railway official who had been killed while on inspection by a lion; of rumors of trouble with certain of the inland tribes; of

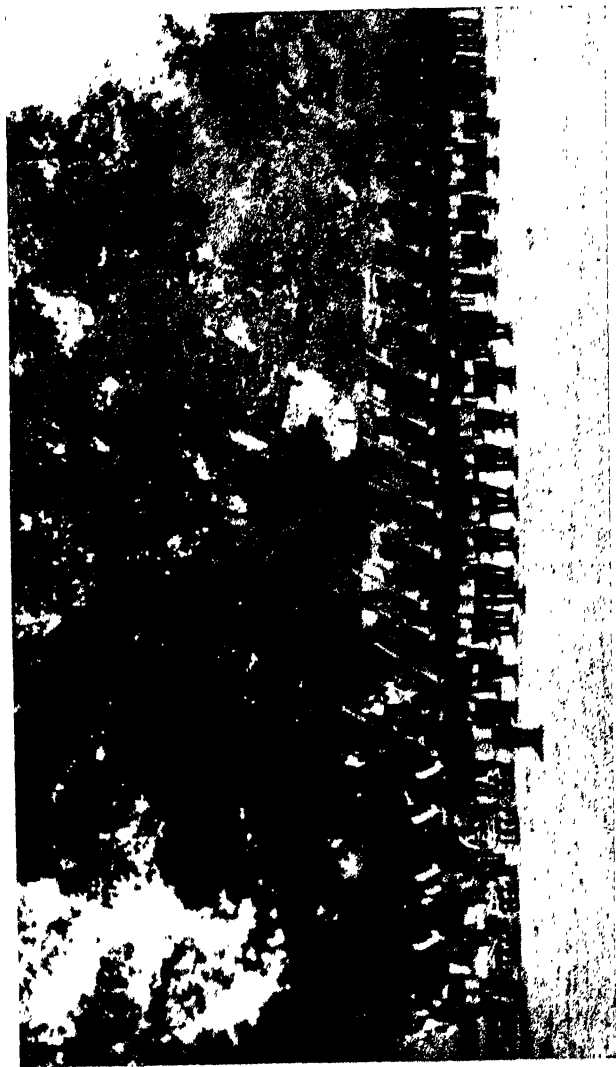
steps that must be taken to keep the territory "a white man's country" by checking the tide of Indian immigration; of the market-price of cotton, coffee, cloves, and ivory; of an elephant herd that had been seen a few miles behind the town; of the business man in Zanzibar who had just won the Calcutta Sweep; of the bishop's son in Kenya who had been convicted of flogging a native servant to death. By these tokens we knew that we were in the Dark Continent.

In a place like Dar-es-Salaam, where the white population is small and social relaxations few and far between, it might be supposed that the social lines would be very loosely drawn. But such is not the case. The colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady may be sisters under their skins, but they don't go to the same dinners or play tennis at the same club. Neither do the wives of, say, the colonial secretary and an assistant police commissioner. Even in these remote outposts of empire, local society, restricted as it is, is broken into sets and cliques, its upper crust being confined to the fortunate few who are on the dinner-list of Government House.

In these African frontier communities moral







THE "K. A. R."

A company of the King's African Rifles—perhaps the best disciplined and most efficient black troops in the world

lapses, if not too flagrant, are usually ignored if not condoned. For passion blossoms more readily under the palm than beneath the pine-tree. But the same tolerance is not always extended to breaches of what the Englishman calls "good form." Though there is a good deal of drinking, drunkenness is comparatively uncommon, certain popular novelists notwithstanding; for the excessive use of spirits is folly in such a climate, and those in authority look with no friendly eye on the white man who lowers European prestige in native eyes.

Some years ago, while traveling in East Africa, I met a young Englishman, an ivory-hunter, who had just emerged from the bush. For more than a year he had not seen a white man's face or heard a white man's voice. Upon our arrival at a certain coast town he celebrated his return to civilization by giving a dinner at the local club. As the evening progressed he became very, very drunk. The boisterous party reached its climax when the host hit the native steward over the head with a billiard-cue and broke all the glassware in the bar. At two in the morning the American consul was awakened by the sound of weeping be-

neath his window. Going down to investigate, he found the chief celebrant seated on the doorstep of the consulate clad in nothing save his underwear. The following day the youth, sobered, contrite, and shamefaced, sent a letter of apology to the board of governors of the club, salved with bank-notes the wounded head and feelings of the steward, and settled for the broken glass. He was at bottom a nice boy, you understand, well bred, of good people, and all that sort of thing. But the board of governors refused to accept his apology and summarily expelled him from the club. Not content with that, they notified all the other clubs between Mombasa and Durban of their action. This meant that from then on the boy had no place save the execrable hotels in which to pass the dreary tropic evenings, to play bridge or billiards, to read the papers from home. And when, some days after his escapade, he accosted on the street a friend of long standing, the latter passed him by with a glassy eye and the contemptuous remark: "I no longer have the pleasure of your acquaintance, sir. I'll trouble you not to again address me."

Such incidents are unimportant in themselves,

of course, save as they serve to illustrate how rigidly certain social conventions are enforced on the fringes of civilization, where, according to the popular notion, a man can do pretty much what he pleases and get away with it. For the Europeans in these distant outposts are like soldiers in a lonely fort, surrounded by potential enemies who are ever on the alert for any weakening of the garrison's morale, ever ready to take advantage of any decline in the white man's greatest asset in dealing with the native—prestige.

In German days, as I can testify from personal experience, Dar-es-Salaam was the scene of drunken orgies whose like could only have been witnessed in the lowest resorts of a European city. The officers and government officials who frequented the club had the manners of a low-class beer-hall. Civilians making purchases in the local shops were shouldered aside when a man in uniform came in. The military swaggered along the streets as though they owned them.

When Mrs. Powell and I first visited the place, back in 1907, we were refused admittance to the Kaiserhof, the spacious and comfortable government hotel, because, as I learned afterward, it

was believed that we were English; for even in those early days the Germans in the colonies made no attempt to conceal their hatred for *die Engländer*. Yet my friends at home smiled incredulously, and deemed me an alarmist, when I told them, half a dozen years before the outbreak of the Great War, that in the regimental messes the German officers cheered wildly the toast, "*Der Tag!*"

Barred from the only respectable hotel in the town, we were forced to seek accommodation in a squalid tavern much frequented by German soldiers and their black and tan women friends. The first night of our stay was made memorable by a party given by a group of officers to celebrate the departure of one of their number, who was returning to the Fatherland. This boisterous and obscene affair—presumably too rough to be held in the Kaiserhof—terminated abruptly in the small hours of the morning when the Teutonic proprietor smashed a beer-bottle over the head of a major who was engaged in breaking up the furniture, a bloody *mêlée* being averted only by the prompt arrival of the military police. Scarcely had I settled myself to sleep when a Ger-





A BUSH VILLAGE

You emerge from the oppressive gloom of the forest into a grassy glade drenched in dazzling sunlight and dotted with mud-walled, grass-thatched huts.



man officer, clad in half a suit of pajamas and much the worse for drink, forced his way into our bedroom. I ejected him forcibly, his fellows being by this time too inebriated to come to his assistance. When the sun rose out of the Indian Ocean it presented the edifying spectacle of the flower of the kaiser's colonial army sprawled, quite naked, in cane chairs along the whole length of the veranda, blear-eyed, apoplectic of complexion, and snoring like so many hogs.

When we entered our room the following afternoon we were startled to hear a series of stertorous grunts issuing from beneath the bed. Assuming, not unnaturally, that a German officer had chosen this secluded spot to sleep off a debauch, I armed myself with a *kiboko* of rhino-hide and, raising the mosquito-net, shouted, "Come on out of there, you swine!" A snore was the only answer. Getting down upon my knees, with the intention of yanking the intruder out by the collar, I peered underneath the bed and beheld—a large white sow and a litter of sucklings!

Bursting with indignation, I sought the proprietor.

"Ach, dose schwein," he grumbled upon hear-

ing my complaint. "I nefer haf knowed dem into der pedrooms to go pefore. Dey schleeps always in der kitchen. Vot a pother! Vot a pother!"

The sun is now near enough to the horizon to permit our laying aside our topees with safety. The pleasant breeze that comes with twilight in the tropics is whispering amid the palm-fronds and gently stirring the blossom-laden branches of the acacias. So let us utilize in a drive beside the sea that brief interim between sunset and darkness when Africa is at her loveliest.

On account of the ravages of the tsetse-fly there are no horses in Dar-es-Salaam, or anywhere else in the territory for that matter, the only conveyances in the town, barring a few government-owned motor-cars, being rickshaws. In German days this was a very inexpensive form of transportation, but since the British occupation the fares have doubled and the rickshaw-boys do not appear to be as well controlled as formerly. The rickshaw, I might add in passing, is not, as commonly supposed, a product of Japanese ingenuity, but was invented by an American missionary.

Stepping to the edge of the sidewalk I raise my stick, and the next instant we are overwhelmed by the ensuing charge of rickshaw coolies, who have been awaiting the appearance of a customer as sprinters await the starter's pistol. The vehicle which we charter has a magnificent team. The sturdy native between the shafts is so full of energy that he can hardly contain himself, prancing like a restive horse while we are taking our seats and almost before we are settled dashing off with great leaps and bounds. In Dar-es-Salaam the rickshaw-boys keep up a sort of singsong as they run, the leader chanting snatches of a Swahili refrain to which the pusher shouts responses from behind. Unless you have some knowledge of Swahili it is always well to have the boys told where you wish to go by some one who speaks the language, for they will invariably answer, "Yes, bwana," to whatever instructions you may give them, whether they understand or not, and then start off in the opposite direction. On one occasion I told my boy to take me to Government House, and he landed me at the police station.

On the smooth red roads of the Tanganyikan

capital, the rickshaw is a delightful form of transportation, in keeping with the picturesque and colorful setting. Here are none of the narrow, tortuous lanes and byways which make Zanzibar one of the quaintest and most bewildering of African cities, but instead a series of fine avenues, flanked by mangos, palms, and acacias, and intersected at regular intervals by shady cross-streets. Leaving behind us the enticing shops of the Indian, Arab, and Cingalese traders, their dim interiors crowded with teakwood furniture, silks, brasswork, carved ivory, weapons, embroideries, we roll swiftly through the European business quarter, the street lined on either side by banks and outfitting-stores and steamship-agencies. Swinging sharply around the granite block which is all that remains of the monument to Major von Wissmann, the intrepid explorer and first imperial commissioner for German East Africa, we pass the fine building of the erstwhile Kaiserhof, now operated by a Greek as the Hotel Versailles. Debouching into the splendid shore drive which rims the lovely, landlocked harbor, we see at the left the broad terraces of the Dar-es-Salaam Club,



A SWAHILI HAIR-DRESSER AND HER VICTIM

The kinky wool is pleated into a series of tight little rows, like miniature plow-furrows



where the official population is gathering for its "sundowner" and to listen to the music of the K.A.R. band. Pausing for a glance at the Reuter's despatches posted on the bulletin-board—for in the outlands one is always hungry for news from home—we tell our rickshaw-boy to take the road to Ocean View, which is the city's Riverside Drive.

In many respects it is the most beautiful drive I know, comparable only to that enchanting stretch of the Florida East Coast Highway which runs beside the Indian River, or to the wonderful avenue through the Botanical Gardens at Buitenzorg, in Java. Speeding silently down a thoroughfare that looks as though it were laid with ruby-red linoleum, shaded by flowering acacias whose boughs interlace overhead in a canopy of green, and bordered by the gorgeous flamboyant whose scarlet blossoms form a wall of living flame, we catch fleeting glimpses on the one hand of white-walled, red-roofed bungalows which peer coyly out at us from a smother of bougainvillea and frangipani and oleander, while on the other recur in rapid succession fascinating, verdure-framed vistas of the palm-fringed, peacock-tinted

harbor, and, beyond, the shimmering, opalescent sea. The waves lap the sandy shingle a score of feet away; the intervening beach is alive and rustling with myriads of land-crabs, which scamper sideways with incredible agility; and an occasional flamingo, its legs like coral pipe-stems, takes hasty flight at our approach.

Then back past the Sports Club, on whose concrete tennis-courts young Englishmen in white flannels are utilizing in vigorous exercise the brief hour or so of comparative coolness; past the white palace where, in other days, the haughty German viceroy dwelt in state; and so back to the streets of garish shops, the lights and smells and clamor of the town. After an indifferent dinner, served on a terrace where life is made miserable by escadrilles of mosquitos and the table lamps are dimmed by dense clouds of moths, we ascend to bare and uninviting rooms opening on a broad wooden gallery to endure as best we may a suffocating, insect-ridden night, vainly seeking to woo sleep while stretched on sodden mattresses beneath the chill blast of an electric fan.



## CHAPTER III

### INTO THE BLUE

SO you 're going into the blue?" remarked the friendly clerk in the outfitting establishment in Dar-es-Salaam where we stocked our chop-boxes with tinned and bottled provisions for our trans-African journey. It was the first time I had heard the phrase which has come to be used by the English of the coast towns to denote a trek into the far interior. A singularly expressive term, it captured my imagination instantly, for it describes aptly, if poetically, the outstanding characteristics of the African hinterland, with its hot blue sky and its bright blue lakes and, in the distance, the deeper blue of the mighty ranges. Yes, I told him, we were indeed going "into the blue"—beyond the Great Lakes, beyond the swamps and forests of the Congo, to that other seaboard of the continent where the blue of the Atlantic begins.

When, under the terms of the Treaty of Ver-

sailles, Great Britain became the mandatory for German East Africa, the British administration took over, along with the other property of the German state, the Central Railway, seven hundred and fifty miles long, which traverses the territory from Dar-es-Salaam to Kigoma, on Lake Tanganyika. Through trains are operated twice weekly, the journey taking fifty hours, which is remarkably good running time in view of the roughness of the road-bed, the detours made necessary by the wholesale destruction of the bridges of the Germans during their retreat from the coast, and the ramshackle condition of the rolling-stock inherited from its former owners.

The carriages are of the compartment-corridor type, each compartment containing two sofas which can be transformed into moderately comfortable beds, while, by raising the leather-covered panels which form the backs of the seats and attaching them to iron hooks hanging from the ceiling, additional accommodation can be produced in the form of two hard and narrow shelves on which the traveler may recline, though sleep is usually out of the question. As on nearly all African railways, the voyager must provide his



TREKKING THROUGH THE TALL GRASS

Colonel Powell's *safari* on the march in Western Tanganyika: 120 in the shade and no shade to speak of!



own bedding and mosquito-net, the latter being absolutely imperative, for the line passes through several tsetse-fly belts. Though one may safely discount the danger of contracting the dreaded sleeping-sickness if he adopts reasonable precautions and is merely traveling through the country, even the most hardened traveler will not long ignore the attacks of the mottled gray flies which have wiped out people and domestic live stock alike over large portions of equatorial Africa; for they will not fail to remind him of their presence by driving into his anatomy, even through several thicknesses of cloth, something that feels like a red-hot needle. And one more word of warning, should you contemplate following in my footsteps. Take along a light but warm overcoat, a thick sweater, and a pair of heavy blankets. For do not fall into the error of assuming that the equator is synonymous with heat. More than once I have shivered beneath woolen coverings under the very shadow of the Line. This would not be surprising in the highlands of Kenya, where it is often bitterly cold, but one hardly looks for such climatic contradictions in the lowlands of the Congo basin.

A little more than a quarter of the whole distance across the continent lies within Tanganyika Territory. And this section of the journey is an unending panorama of beauty and interest. Leaving Dar-es-Salaam stewing in its humid heat, the train runs for several hours through miasmatic, mosquito-ridden swamps and impenetrable jungle before it begins the climb to the Great Central Plateau. At frequent intervals along the line, particularly in the lowlands, are to be seen cement slabs or rude wooden crosses which mark the last resting-places of those pioneers who paid the price of empire with their lives here in the lonely bush. Occasionally the names inscribed upon them are English; more frequently German; but always they are tended with scrupulous care, for the white man in Africa is jealous of his dead. Of those Europeans whose graves mark the line of the steel highway—and it is said that each of the twelve hundred and fifty kilometers claimed at least one white victim—many a one was suddenly struck down by the dreaded black-water fever, which, as its name implies, is characterized by discoloration of the urine. But black-water, though doubtless the deadliest ailment to which

the European in Africa is subject, is by no means the only one. Death's angels in the guise of malaria, dysentery, tick-fever, typhoid, sunstroke, more rarely elephantiasis and sleeping-sickness, were ever busy among the white workers on the railway-line. They came silently, suddenly, in the watches of the night, tapping their victims with clammy hands, bidding them cease their labors and follow them into the unknown.

Though few regions in Africa are richer in big game than the one traversed by the Tanganyika Railways, disappointment usually awaits the traveler who anticipates seeing something in the nature of a sublimated Zoo. In this respect Tanganyika is quite dissimilar to Abyssinia, where wild animals are more in evidence along the line of the Franco-Ethiopian Railway than domestic live stock. Yet there is no telling what may be seen, for the game is there—make no mistake about that—and it is seldom indeed that the passenger is not rewarded by the sight of herds of bush-buck, zebra, and giraffe scampering across the plain, while lions, rhinoceroses, and even elephants may occasionally be seen from the car-window. This railway is certainly the only one

in the world which has been compelled to increase the height of its telegraph-poles along certain sections of the line in order to prevent the wires from being broken by giraffes. A few months before I crossed the territory the mail-train was actually charged by a rhinoceros, which lost its life in the encounter, and upon another trip the engineer, taking a curve at high speed, came suddenly upon six lions gorging themselves upon the carcass of a giraffe which they had brought down on the line. But the classic animal story—and I was assured by railway officials that it was quite authentic—is of the telegram received by a division superintendent from the Goanese station-master at a lonely stopping-place in the jungle. “Lions inspecting the station,” it read. “Please send rifle and fifty rounds of ammunition by first train. Personally am departing immediately for the bush.”

Though in certain sections of Tanganyika elephants are so numerous and destructive that the Government, in order to protect the native farmers, occasionally commissions professional ivory-hunters to kill up to twenty-five animals without a license, in return for which the Government







ONE OF OUR PORTERS

The length of copper wire around his ankle explains why the telegraph service in Tanganyika is always breaking down

receives half the ivory, the game-laws are rigidly enforced, every hunter being required to take out a shooting-license, which costs fifteen pounds for each elephant, and to surrender to the authorities all tusks weighing less than thirty pounds.

The ups and downs of a professional ivory-hunter's life were graphically pictured for me by a lean, hard-bitten young Scotsman named Forbes who boarded the train at Kilossa and with whom I quickly fell into conversation in the free and easy fashion of the frontier.

Some weeks before, it seemed, he had set out on *safari*, but, through that perversity of fate with which all hunters are familiar, the elephants had persistently eluded him. At length, discouraged by a fortnight of fruitless trekking, he pitched his camp one evening in the outskirts of a native village. Shortly before daybreak he was awakened by his head boy, who informed him that a herd of elephants was ravaging a mealie-patch only half a mile away. Creeping up to the herd on hands and knees in the uncertain light of early dawn, Forbes selected his quarry, a bull, which at the same moment caught sight of him and charged. The ivory-hunter, determined to make

certain of his aim, coolly waited until the bull was almost upon him. Then he let go both barrels of his heavy express-rifle in rapid succession. But, though both bullets found their mark, the elephant, trumpeting with rage, came on, whereupon Forbes, casting aside his empty weapon, turned and fled for his life. It was open country, without refuge of any kind, and he had given himself up for lost when suddenly the pachyderm stumbled, swayed, and toppled over, but not before one of its ponderous feet had smashed the discarded rifle into match-wood.

"It was a damned expensive experience for me," Forbes concluded, "for it cost me a fortnight's time, the wages of my *safari*, a fifty-guinea rifle, and the fifteen pounds I had paid for the rifle; and not a blessed penny to show for it."

"But the elephant had tusks," I suggested.

"Oh, yes, he carried points right enough," the ivory-hunter growled resentfully, using the vernacular of his calling, "but a fat lot of good they did me. For when I put them on the scales I found that they were just eight ounces under weight, so I had to turn them over to the Government."

No account of Tanganyika Territory would be complete without at least passing mention of the remarkable campaign of which it was the scene during the Great War. When all is said and done, however, the story of that campaign is the story of the courage, resourcefulness, and iron determination of one man, Major-General von Lettow-Vorbeck, the commander-in-chief of the German forces in East Africa. He was the heart and soul of the dogged German resistance, a resistance which continued for four years against overwhelming odds; it was he who rallied his starving, ragged, war-weary troops and inspired them to deeds which won the outspoken admiration of their enemies; he was the one German soldier who gained a high reputation in the colonial theater of operations. The story of his exploits forms one of the most amazing chapters in the annals of the far-flung conflict.

Lieutenant-Colonel von Lettow-Vorbeck, as he then was, landed at Dar-es-Salaam in the early months of 1914 to assume command of the colonial forces, which at that time numbered less than three thousand men. About two hundred and fifty of these were German officers and non-commis-

sioned officers; the balance black *askari*. He had just passed his fortieth birthday, a Prussian Guard officer of the traditionally hard-boiled, stiff-necked type who as a young man had served as a volunteer in Kruger's artillery during the Boer War and under his own flag in China during the Boxer troubles and in Southwest Africa during the Herero rebellion. Before going out to East Africa he had been in command of one of the sea-battalions at Wilhelmshafen.

From the outset he was at loggerheads with the imperial governor, Dr. Schnee. When word reached Dar-es-Salaam that war had been declared, the weak-kneed civil officials were of the unanimous opinion that the colony would have to capitulate within a few weeks, since it was recognized that neither reinforcements nor supplies could hope to reach East Africa even if Germany could spare them. But von Lettow-Vorbeck, who was a fighter first, last, and all the time, bluntly informed the imperial governor that he had been intrusted with the military defense of the colony and that he intended to defend it. In direct defiance of the governor's orders he initiated operations against the Allies by authorizing a volunteer

force of planters from the northern districts to attack Taveta, a British post just across the Kenya border; and when, in November, 1914, the Indian Expeditionary Force attacked Tanga and the governor ordered him to retire without giving battle, he again disregarded the command and British arms sustained a severe defeat.

For the ensuing eighteen months the British forces acted purely on the defensive, this period of respite being utilized by von Lettow-Vorbeck to recruit his forces, every man in the colony capable of bearing arms or of bearing a load, white and black alike, being summoned to the colors. Hence, when the British commander, General Smuts, undertook offensive tactics in the spring of 1916, he found himself opposed by a strong and well-disciplined force under the leadership of a brilliant, resolute, and ruthless soldier. It might be remarked at this point that the highest total of German forces in the field at any one time was 3300 white and about 15,000 native *askari*, against whom the Allies mustered upward of 125,000 men—British, Indians, Portuguese, and Belgians.

By the end of 1916, however, von Lettow-

Vorbeck's position had become untenable, for the British were advancing from the coast while a force of twenty thousand native troops from the Belgian Congo under General Tambreur had crossed Lake Tanganyika and taken Kigoma and Tabora. Lake Tanganyika, by the way, was the scene of one of the most brilliant naval engagements of the war when two British motor-launches, conveyed in sections from England and launched with enormous difficulty, sank one German gunboat and disabled another. Though only a miniature affair, it played an important part in the conquest of East Africa by clearing the lake of the Germans and leaving it free for the passage of troops and supplies from the Congo.

A remarkable attempt to carry medical and other comforts to von Lettow-Vorbeck late in 1917 failed only because of a mistake in a radio message. On November 21 Zeppelin *L-59*, known as The Balkan Terror, under von Butlar, left Yambol, Bulgaria, crossed the Mediterranean to Egypt, and, skirting the fringe of the Libyan Desert, reached the latitude of Khartoum on November 23. The passage of the great air-ship over Egyptian territory caused intense excitement, the au-



thorities assuming that it intended to bomb the Assouan Dam. When near Khartoum von Butlar received a wireless message: "Return. East Africa occupied." Accordingly the *L-59* turned its nose northward and on November 25 reached its moorings at Yambol, having in four days made a non-stop flight of forty-five hundred miles.

During the last two years of the war von Lettow-Vorbeck was constantly retreating, first southward across the Rovuma into Portuguese territory and later westward into Rhodesia. But, though enormously outnumbered and on several occasions completely surrounded, his men short of ammunition and rations and worn out with constant marching, fortune continued to befriend the indomitable German. Even the three wounds he received and the repeated attacks of enteric and dysentery from which he suffered failed to weaken his iron determination. While lying at death's door he insisted on giving orders and when still too weak to sit up defied his medical officers by having himself carried along the lines in a hammock. He exacted unquestioning obedience and accepted no excuses. Three of his officers committed suicide because they had in-

curred his displeasure, one of them, who had failed to halt a British column, shooting himself with a revolver which von Lettow-Vorbeck handed to him with the significant remark, "I shall expect to hear from you shortly, major." He slept among his *askari* as one of themselves, wrapped in a cheap native blanket, and save at the Battle of Chiwata, when he went into action wearing the full insignia of his rank and all his decorations, dressed as a common soldier.

He was the only German commander in any theater of the war who succeeded in evading capitulation until peace had been declared in Europe. When word reached him of the signing of the Armistice he was at Abercorn, in Northern Rhodesia, where he surrendered, his force having dwindled to 155 Germans and less than 1200 natives, with one field-piece and thirty-seven machine-guns. For his heroic services the emperor promoted him to the rank of major-general and bestowed on him the Order Pour le Mérite, the highest of all Prussian decorations.

During the greater part of the campaign in East Africa the British and Belgians had effec-



ONCE A CENTER OF THE TRADE IN "BLACK IVORY"

A street in Ujiji. The town, a straggling collection of mud-walled, straw-thatched huts, its rough streets shaded by palms and mango-trees, was a very important settlement in the days of Tippoo Tib and his Arab slavers



tively coöperated, but dissension quickly developed when it came to a division of the spoils. Up to the Armistice each nation administered the districts occupied by its respective troops, the Belgians from their headquarters at Tabora, controlling an area which comprised the whole western third of the territory, from Lake Victoria on the north nearly to the southern end of Tanganyika. But by a decision of the Supreme Council in May, 1919, the mandate for German East Africa was assigned, without qualification, to Great Britain. This award was bitterly contested by Belgium, however, which advanced claims not only to the Ruanda-Urundi, the richest portion of the whole territory, but to a much larger area as well, including the province of Ujiji with the lake-port of Kigoma, which is the terminus of the railway from the coast. The dispute was finally settled by an Anglo-Belgian agreement, under the terms of which Belgium received all of the Ruanda-Urundi country save such parts as were needed by England in order to allow the projected railway from Tabora to western Uganda—a link in the Cape-to-Cairo system—to run through territory under

British administration. The remainder of the conquered territory, including the Ujiji province, went to Great Britain, though, by a later convention, Belgium obtained the right to transport her goods free of all customs duties over the Kigoma-Dar-es-Salaam railway, together with concessions at both ports for wharves and bonded warehouses.

In accordance with the terms of the Covenant of the League of Nations, Great Britain, as the mandatory for the territory, bound herself to grant equality to the nationals of all members of the League in matters of residence, trade, and commerce. Now this condition had an important bearing on the position of British Indians in Tanganyika, as it prevented any discrimination against them, such as has embittered the relations between the English and Indian settlers in the neighboring colony of Kenya. The Indians were quick to avail themselves of this open door; by 1921 there were fifteen thousand of them in Tanganyika, and this number has since greatly increased. Shrewd traders and cheap livers, they have penetrated to every part of the territory, and, save for the competition of the Greeks in

certain districts, the retail trade is almost wholly in their hands.

What Tanganyika Territory most needs if it is to become prosperous, even self-supporting, is an influx of European settlers; the right kind of Europeans, I mean. For, after the war, the Germans were expelled from the territory *en masse*, their properties being confiscated and sold at public auction. Now it should be understood that many of the German planters had never been in Germany in their lives. They had been born and had always lived in the colony, and in being deported to the Fatherland they were being sent to what was a foreign country to most of them. A rather curious circumstance, is it not, that in expelling these German settlers from East Africa, the British followed the widely condemned precedent which another British government had set nearly two centuries before when it expelled the French farmers from Acadia, as so touchingly described in Longfellow's "Evangeline"?

To my way of thinking—and I found not a few British officials who agreed with me—this was an unintelligent and short-sighted policy, for the country is desperately in need of white settlers,

vast stretches of arable land remain untouched by hoe or plow, and the prosperity which was just beginning to manifest itself as the result of a quarter-century of intensive effort on the part of the Germans ended abruptly with the change in administration. Had the British adopted the same statesmanlike policy in Tanganyika which they pursued in South Africa after the Boer War, and had permitted the bona-fide German settlers—for the most part sober, frugal, industrious folk who were thoroughly familiar with the country, its people, and its problems—to remain in undisturbed possession of the farmsteads which they had wrested from the wilderness, I believe that they would have accepted the changed conditions and would have settled down as loyal citizens, proving an invaluable asset to the territory. But in their stead has come a swarm of Greeks and Indians with a low standard of living whose sole ambition is to make their pile and shake the dust of the country as quickly as possible from their feet. Perhaps it is too much to expect a victorious people to renounce the fruits of their victory, but, unless I am very much mistaken, time will show that it would have been the wisest course in the end.







Doubtless it will come as a surprise to most people to learn that the British officials in Tanganyika with whom I discussed the matter—and I talked with men of all grades, from the governor down to political officers stationed at lonely outposts in the bush—were unanimous in assuring me that the natives, far from hating the Germans, as has been frequently asserted, were by no means hostile to German rule, which, though lacking in flexibility and often unnecessarily harsh, was marked, on the whole, by justice and wisdom. The best résumé of the differences between German and British methods was given me by a British administrator in western Tanganyika, an exceptionally shrewd and able man with a long African experience behind him.

“When the Germans occupied a country,” said he, “they lost not a moment in putting an abiding fear and respect for the white man into the native heart. Crime, disloyalty, and insubordination were ruthlessly stamped out by shooting, hanging, imprisonment, and flogging. Once the natives had become convinced, however, that the white man had come to stay and that he would stand no nonsense, the grip of the iron hand was relaxed, since there was no further need for it. The status of

each being thus definitely established, the Germans and the natives thenceforward usually got on very well together.

“But we British begin at the other end. Coming into a country inhabited by a savage and naturally lawless people, we make the initial mistake of being too lenient, too easy-going—often, it must be admitted, in deference to public opinion at home. This the native interprets as weakness, for your African savage has been bred to brutality, the only thing he respects is force. So, presuming on our imagined weakness, some of the tribes break loose, and we have on our hands another little war which has to be stamped out by much the same methods which the Germans employed, but involving a far greater loss of life. The chief difference between the German policy and ours, when all is said and done, is that they used the iron hand to avert trouble, whereas we do not use it until the trouble has arrived.”

Let me say here that the officials to whom Great Britain has intrusted the administration of her Tanganyika mandate are as efficient, broad-minded, and likable a set of men as I have encountered in any colony in the world. All of those

with whom I talked impressed me as having a real understanding and a genuine sympathy for the native, his needs, his limitations, and his problems. Nor was there the slightest disposition on the part of any of them to regard Tanganyika as a British possession.

“We are merely holding the territory in trust,” one of them explained, “and we must give an accounting of our stewardship to the League of Nations. Many things can happen in the next few years and—who knows?—the territory may eventually be returned to the Germans.”

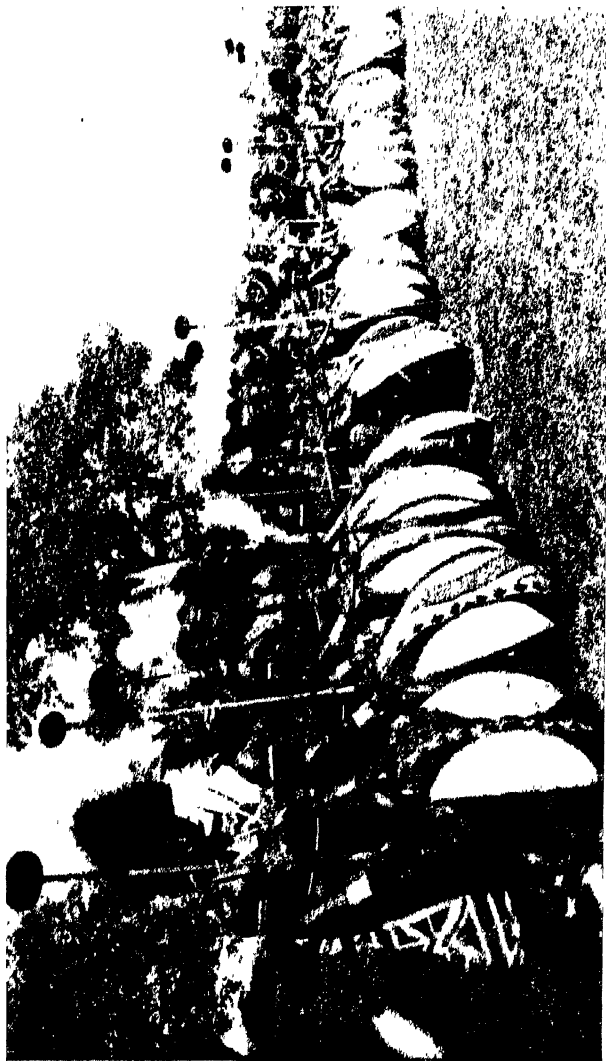
For my part—and I have never hesitated to criticize British colonial methods when I believed that they deserved criticism—I am convinced that Tanganyika and its people could suffer no greater calamity than to have the British go.

## CHAPTER IV

DOCTOR LIVINGSTONE, I PRESUME

AFTER reaching Morogoro, a pretty but fever-ridden little town nestling in the shadow of the lofty Uluguru Range, we leave the jungle behind us and emerge on rolling, grassy plains sprinkled with waving palms, moving across which may usually be seen large herds of game. This gives way in turn to open, park-like country, from whose umbrella-shaped trees hang, like great black fruit, the curious nests of the weaver-bird. The Arab influence so predominant nearer the coast has now in large measure disappeared, the Swahili in his red tarboosh and snowy *kanza* being replaced by half-naked, savage-looking tribesmen with great shocks of fuzzy, tangled hair, who stand on one foot, the other tucked up under them, like storks, leaning on their broad-bladed, murderous spears. A wild and sparsely peopled land, this, across whose solitudes the whistle of the locomotive





*Photo by Dr. H. L. Shuntz*

**MASAI FIGHTING MEN. TANGANYIKA TERRITORY**

The Masai, whose favorite sport is hunting the lion with spears, are the fiercest warriors and greatest cattle-raiders in all East Africa



resounds mournfully as we thunder westward to the Great Lakes.

Soon we find ourselves in the country of the Masai, those rich and warlike cattle-raisers whose grazing-lands sweep right across East Africa from the Abyssinian frontier to the borders of Mozambique. The Masai are one of the handsomest and haughtiest peoples in Africa; their costumes and customs are as curious as any in the world. They are a well-made race, tall and slender, with chocolate skins, Mongolian-shaped eyes, and noses which are almost Caucasian. Their features are given a wolfish appearance, however, by their custom of knocking out the two lower incisor teeth, the reason given for this curious practice being that an epidemic of lock-jaw having once raged in Masai-land, these gaps are made so that, should there be a recurrence of the disease, the sufferers could be fed more easily. A barbaric fashion, yes, but not greatly different after all, when you stop to think about it, from our own custom of having the appendix removed to prevent appendicitis.

Both sexes pull out all the hair on the body with tweezers; a Masai with a beard or mustache is

unknown. Women and married men shave their heads, but the hair of a youth is permitted to grow until it is long enough to have strips of leather plaited into it. After being thoroughly smeared with red clay and mutton-fat, it is made into pigtails, the longest of which hangs down the back like a Chinaman's queue, a shorter one over the forehead, and others in front of each ear. Following the feminine fashions in Masai-land must be a distinctly painful business, for, after her body has been made hairless by the tweezers, a Masai maiden has the lobes of her ears slit and huge wooden spools, several inches in thickness, thrust through the openings thus made, while her legs are so tightly wound with thick iron wire that the development of the calf is almost wholly arrested.

In order to terrify his enemies, no doubt, a Masai warrior, arrayed for battle, achieves an appearance both hideous and fantastic. His body, thickly smeared with mutton-fat, is streaked and ringed with red and white clay in fantastic patterns. A length of red calico is twisted about his loins; garters of long white fur encircle his legs below the knees; his arms

are heavy with iron, brass, and copper bracelets; from his neck is slung an amazing collection of beads, charms, and amulets; his face is framed by a circle of ostrich-feathers, in lieu of which he sometimes wears a towering cap of lions' manes and colobus skins. His weapons consist of a long-bladed, long-shafted spear and the terrible *simé*, a sword with a blade like a long, slender leaf, broad at the point and very narrow toward the hilt. The Masai, whose favorite sport is hunting the lion with spears, are warlike, haughty, and quarrelsome, being a constant source of anxiety to the British authorities. As recently as 1923, in fact, there was a serious uprising in Masai-land, precipitated by the activities of the witch-doctors, who are often chiefs, the paramount chief being almost always a medicine-man.

Though the bodies of the dead are customarily carried a short distance from the village and left on the ground to be devoured by vultures, hyenas, and jackals, the corpses of important chieftains are usually buried. A year later the eldest son or successor of the deceased recovers the skull, which is highly valued as a charm.

The diet of the Masai consists mainly of blood

and milk, the former being obtained from their cattle in a peculiar fashion. The jugular vein of an ox is tapped by shooting into it from a short bow a small, spade-headed arrow, scarcely larger than a lead-pencil, through the hollow shaft of which the blood is drained into a gourd. When the required quantity has been obtained the arrow is withdrawn and the vein closes up, the animal then being turned out to graze until it is fully recuperated, when it is subjected to the same ordeal all over again. The blood thus obtained is stirred with milk, the mixture being boiled to the consistency of a thick porridge, which, if not palatable from the European standpoint, is at least highly nutritious. The Masai also make a curious kind of butter, the milk being curdled by mixing it with cow's urine. Those who have tried it assure me that this synthetic butter is quite palatable, or would be were it not for its repulsive odor.

But the oddest of all the customs of the Masai is the importance attached to spitting. To spit upon a person is regarded by most peoples as an unpardonable insult and is resented as such, but among the Masai it is considered a sign of rever-



#### AT UJIJI

Beneath this ancient mango-tree took place that famous meeting, one of the most dramatic in all history, which is commemorated by the inscription on the block of cement set in the sandy soil: "Livingstone-Stanley, 1871"



ence and good will. Newly born children, to put it inelegantly, are not much more than human cuspidors, being spat upon by every one who sees them, just as in America we benevolently pat a child upon the head. The Masai spit when they meet and when they part, and upon their palms when they shake hands with strangers, bargains invariably being sealed by the expectoration of saliva. An English explorer, Joseph Thompson, writes: "Being regarded as a wizard of the first water, the Masai flocked to me . . . and the more copiously I spat upon them the greater was their delight."

When the purple velvet night lifts to reveal the gray chiffon of dawn, which in these latitudes so quickly gives place to the naked glare of the full day, we find the train laboriously ascending the steep escarpment of the Southern Rift, that great trough which, the geologists tell us, reaches right across East Africa, the Red Sea, and Arabia, to the foot of the Lebanon. The country through which we have steamed during the night, jungle, thorn-bush, forest, and grass-land, its surface checkered here and there with waving fields of

maize, millet, and cassava, lies spread below us like a map in bas-relief, while away to the south glitters the snow-white surface of the salt-swamps of the Unyangwira. Now the air has the exhilarating quality of dry champagne, for we are on the Great Central Plateau, a section of that mighty continental divide which, a few hundred miles to the northward, across the Kenya border, attains its apogee in the nineteen-thousand-foot peak of Kilimanjaro, where one may enjoy the winter sports of Switzerland in midsummer while actually on the equator.

Toward twilight of the second day the train, with much jolting and squealing of brakes, draws up before the station of Tabora, next to Dar-es-Salaam the most important town in Tanganyika. Here, half a mile above the level of the sea, the air is as fresh and cool as on a spring evening at home; the station grounds are gay with the shrubs and flowers common to more temperate latitudes; the shady, well-kept roads, the stretches of smooth turf, the trim white buildings, conspicuous among which is the fine hotel built by the Germans, give Tabora scant resemblance to the Central African town of one's imagination. Here



also, on the threshold of the Congo Basin, may be seen the old *tembe* where Livingstone and Stanley, the pioneers of that mighty river, dwelt together; the pass between the two hills where they parted forever; the battle-grounds where Arab sultans and Wanyamwezi kings, khaki-clad troops from Kenya, South Africa, the Congo, and black men who wore the kaiser's uniform, fought desperately for the possession of the granary of East Africa.

Leaving behind us the monotonous savannah of the plateau, broken only by patriarchal baobabs or the kraals and flat-roofed huts of the Wagogo cattle-raisers, the train tears westward. Now we are in the land of the lion. As nightfall draws on bright fires spring up around the thorn-hedged cattle-kraals, for only so can the herds be protected from depredations, and when the train pauses at lonely stations in the bush we can hear the lords of the jungle roaring. As darkness is merging into dawn we drop down the Malagarisi valley into the Central African Rift, and, roaring across the swampy delta of the Luiche, come to a halt before the imposing station of Kigoma, the first stage of our trans-African journey at an end.

In a little more than two days, and in comparative comfort, we have made a journey which formerly required three months of arduous toil and constant danger to accomplish.

Kigoma, its neat white buildings dotting the grassy slopes of a headland which rises sharply from the shore of Lake Tanganyika, is one of the most attractive little African towns that I have ever seen. The Germans had ambitious plans for the place. With visions of a populous town, thriving on the trade from across the great inland sea, springing up on the curved hills above the bay, they were busily engaged at the outbreak of hostilities in transforming its landlocked harbor into a modern port, complete with wharves and warehouses and workshops, through which the raw products of Central Africa were to pour in an unending stream to Dar-es-Salaam, there to be transhipped to vessels flying the flag of the Fatherland, while another stream, flowing eastward by the same route, was to flood with German goods the rich markets of the Congo Basin. But all this was ended by the war. The wharves and the marine workshops, half completed, are already falling into decay, for Britain has no money to



THE HEAD OF OUR SAFARI  
Approaching Kilgoma and the shores of Lake Tanganyika



lavish on an unprofitable mandate; the trade from across the lake which was to give life to the colony's main artery is practically dead; the few small steamers which ply on Tanganyika fly not the British flag but the Belgian; and the gloom of at least temporary stagnation hovers over everything.

For the traveler there is little to see and nothing to do in Kigoma. Facing on a sun-swept square is a large, substantial, handsome building—erected, of course, by the Germans—which houses the offices of the political, postal, and railway administrations. A single straggling, tree-lined thoroughfare, deep in yellow dust during the dry season and heavily coated with sticky, adobe-like mud during the rains, is lined by the usual collection of unpainted shanties, roofed with corrugated iron, where Indian and Levantine traders grow rich selling the necessities of life at exorbitant prices. Because of the long haul from the coast and the lack of competition, everything is expensive. For example, for a pair of cheaply made mosquito-boots, which in Central Africa are as necessary as a sun-helmet, a Greek trader demanded the equivalent of twenty dollars. On the

hill above the town are a few whitewashed bungalows where the European officials live, and a mile or so across the valley is a mission station of the White Fathers. The sole signs of activity I could detect was on the wharves, where half-hearted efforts were being made to repair a small lake-steamer which had been sunk by the Germans and raised by the British. The lake itself is charming—to look upon—but sailing is unsafe because of the violent squalls which arise without warning, and bathing is hazardous, save in a wire-inclosed pool, because of man-eating sharks. From nine until five the heat, though sometimes tempered by a lake breeze, is appalling, and enjoyment of the glorious nights is made impossible by swarms of voracious mosquitos.

A portion of the fine hotel which the Germans built on the bluff is now occupied by the British commissioner and his family; the remainder of the empty rooms are tenanted by myriads of bats, and the traveler must be satisfied with the scanty comforts he can find between the mud walls of a miserable Greek hostelry. We were more fortunate, however, for the commissioner and his charming wife rescued us from the clutches of the

Hellenic hotel-keeper by offering us the use of a wing of the one-time Kaiserhof. Here, with our boys to fetch the water and do the washing—for in Africa one's garments are eternally in need of soap, water, and iron—our own beds, a folding bath-tub, and a well-stocked chop-box, we were able to make ourselves as comfortable as I have been in many a summer hotel at home. We had the camp-beds set up on the deep balcony which opened from our room, and when I awoke to see the great lake, with its bold bluffs and grassy shores, sparkling like an enormous sapphire in the African sunshine, with the forest-clad ranges of the Congo rising beyond, I could hardly bring myself to believe that I was not looking across Lake Champlain to the Green Mountains of Vermont and that the little steamer chug-chugging around the point was not whistling for Ticonderoga.

To me, at least, the map of Africa bears no more magic name than Ujiji, the populous native town, some four or five miles south of Kigoma, where Stanley and Livingstone first met. All my life it had been a familiar name; all my life I had wanted

to see it. And, to make the realization of my wish complete, I went as Stanley did, in a *machilla*, a hammock slung from a pole and borne by relays of sweating porters. The town, a straggling collection of mud-walled, straw-thatched huts, its streets shaded by double rows of mango-trees, was a very important settlement in the days of Tippoo Tib and his Arab slavers, for whose dhows the shallow anchorage sufficed, especially at a time when the water-level of the lake stood twelve feet higher than it does to-day. It is a curious fact, however, and one difficult of explanation, that the splendid natural harbor of Kigoma, only an hour's march away, was entirely disregarded by a people whose trade and very existence were based on the navigation of the lake.

In a lifetime rich in experiences and sensations, I have rarely known a deeper thrill than when, swinging down the long, shady thoroughfare which forms the main artery of the old Arab town, my bearers, turning into that squalid section which had once been the waterfront but is now half a mile or more from the margin of the lake, halted abruptly beneath an ancient mango-tree, half of which has withered away. Scrambling





THE MEMSAHIB

Mrs. Powell is one of the few white women who have crossed the continent of Africa from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic



from the *machilla*, I found myself standing before an oblong block of cement set in the sandy soil beneath the tree. It bore the brief but pregnant inscription: "*Livingstone—Stanley, 1871.*"

Here took place that famous meeting, one of the most dramatic in all history, of the two great pathfinders. I had only to close my eyes to visualize the scene. The great tree with its canopy of spreading branches, green and lusty then. The lake, bright blue beneath the sun. Along its edge a fringe of conical, grass-roofed huts before which lounged numerous onlookers, black men and brown; some the naked savages of Central Africa, leaning on their spears; others, hawk-nosed, hard of eye and cruel of mouth, in the brilliant turbans and flowing white *kanzas* of the Arab slave-trader. Seated in the shade of the tree a solitary white man in a drill jacket and a peaked cap, a much worn Testament in his hand. He is emaciated, hollow-cheeked, feverish of eye, deathly pale beneath his tan. A sudden clamor rises from down the northern road. There comes into sight a long caravan of native porters, their sweating bodies glistening like bronze. Above them, borne by a proud Swahili, floats a flag of

stars and stripes. Striding along at the head of the column is a white man, short, broad-shouldered, rugged, grim. He advances briskly, and the figure reclining in the camp-chair beneath the tree struggles unsteadily to his feet to greet him. The new-comer lifts his sun-hat ceremoniously, as though he were addressing a stranger on Piccadilly.

“My name is Stanley. And you are Doctor Livingstone, I presume.”

## CHAPTER V

### THE EMPIRE-BUILDERS

TO most people the Congo is little more than a name, a great square block of territory sprawled athwart the map of Africa. Ever since its frontiers were first staked out by Stanley half a century ago its name has been associated in the public mind with jungles and forests, fevers and sleeping-sickness, pygmies and cannibals, elephants and ivory, the slave-trade and the rubber atrocities. But what is the country really like? Is there any truth in the tales we are told of its fabulous natural riches? Is civilization making actual progress there, or does it remain sunk in savagery and superstition? Will it continue to be a dark spot on the map or does it give promise of becoming a bright one?

Before we cross the threshold of the Congo it might be well for me to answer these questions by sketching the main features of its physiography, its history, and its government in brief,

bold outline, for without such a background it is difficult to understand the peculiar conditions which exist in the colony to-day.

Geographically the Belgian Congo is one of the most curious countries in the world, being to all intents and purposes a great inland empire, for, though it has an area of nine hundred and ten thousand square miles—eighty-eight times the size of Belgium, ten times that of Great Britain, and nearly one third that of the United States—it has a coast-line of less than thirty miles, this narrow strip between French and Portuguese territory being the colony's only window on the salt water. It needs comparisons rather than figures to convey a true idea of its immensity. Thus an airplane flying across the colony from the great bend of the Ubaughi on the northwest to the southeastern corner of the Katanga must cover a distance equal to that from New York to Denver. The traveler who strikes southwestward from Lake Albert must journey as far as from the English Channel to the Bosphorus before he can hear the Atlantic combers breaking on the bar at Banana.

The outstanding physical feature of the colony





INFANT EBONY

They represented the whole gamut of African tints, these urchins of Ujiji—tea, russet, coffee, chocolate, and licorice



is the mighty river from which it takes its name, which, with its numerous tributaries, has nearly twelve thousand miles of water navigable for steamers and twice that for launches and canoes. For it must be remembered that the basin of the Congo spreads far beyond Belgian territory, its drainage area being estimated at 1,425,000 square miles. The main artery of this tremendous river system is, of course, the Congo itself, which sweeps across the colony in a great curve for a distance of twenty-five hundred miles. The Congo is navigable for ocean steamers only as far as Matadi, ninety-three miles from its mouth. From Matadi to Kinshasa, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, stretches a series of impassable cataracts and rapids formed by the river forcing its way through the Serro do Crystal, a mountain range which runs parallel with the western coast of the continent. It is a thousand miles from Kinshasa, on Stanley Pool, to Stanleyville, at Stanley Falls, and the river is navigable all the way. Between Stanleyville and the head of navigation at Bukama, in the extreme south-eastern part of the colony, traffic on the Lualaba, as this portion of the Congo is usually called, is

twice interrupted by cataracts, around both of which are railways. As Bukama is the terminus of the great South African railway system which runs south to Cape Town, it is now possible to travel by river and rail all the way from the mouth of the Congo to the Cape of Good Hope.

This remarkable inland artery of commerce is prolonged for thousands of miles in every direction by several great tributaries—the most important being the Ubanghi, which, with the Bomu, forms the boundary between Belgian and French territory; and the Kasai, whose countless branches cover the southern portion of the colony with a perfect network of waterways. With the advance of civilization this great river system is destined to provide transportation and water-power not only for the whole of the Belgian Congo but for all of equatorial Africa.

The Congo is generally thought of as a vast, low-lying jungle, a steaming equatorial swamp, so it will come as a distinct surprise to most people, I imagine, to learn that nearly two thirds of the colony consist of plateaus and highlands, some of them six thousand feet in height, on which is found a cool and healthful climate, very similar

to that of the temperate zones. The most extensive of these plateaus is in the northeast, a wonderfully beautiful region of mountains, forests, and plains, which is said to be one of the finest cattle-raising districts in the world. The next largest plateau is that of the Katanga, in the southeast, which contains the greatest copper reserve known. There are also smaller regions of plateau altitude on the lower Congo, between Stanley Pool, and along the colony's southwestern frontier. Thus it will be seen that the Congo is by no means so universally low and hot as it has been pictured in the popular mind.

Of course the colony has its swampy and miasmal lowlands, lying within the Great Bend of the Congo, which encompasses them on the west, north, and east. According to the geologists this region was once a great inland sea, and it is still marshy in many parts and dotted with numerous lakes, but a surprisingly large proportion of the land is fit for human habitation and cultivation.

It would seem that the highlands of the Congo, which, as I have already remarked, form two thirds of the total area of the country, contain about two thirds of the total population, which

has been variously estimated at from nine to fifteen millions, the truth probably lying somewhere between these figures. The native population comprises an enormous number of tribes and subtribes, speaking many distinct languages and dialects and representing all stages of development from utter savagery to the higher forms of primitive life, with a small sprinkling of those who have attained at least the rudiments of civilization.

The peoples of the Congo have no common tongue, the multiplicity of the tribal languages being a serious obstacle to the progress of the country and to the colonial authorities a matter of perplexity and concern. By far the most important is Swahili, which is spoken by millions of natives throughout the Katanga and the regions bordering on the Great Lakes, its sphere extending as far west as Stanley Falls. On the Middle Congo, from Stanley Falls down to Kinshasa, Lingala is commonly spoken. On the Lower Congo, from Kinshasa to the sea, the natives employ a tongue called Kikongo, while the language of the great Kasai region is Baluba. There are various other dialects that are used by groups





COLONEL POWELL CROSSING THE LUKUGA

In these portions of Equatorial Africa where the ts-tse-fly has wiped out domestic livestock, the only forms of transportation are canoes and hammocks. (Note the ancient rail-coat on the leading bearer.)

of considerable size, but the linguistic experts, both government and missionary, are agreed that only the four tongues mentioned are deserving of serious consideration as languages for general use. As a multiplicity of languages necessarily multiplies the difficulties of administration, industry, and education, serious consideration is now being given by the Government to a plan for making Swahili the common tongue for all the peoples of the colony.

I suppose that nearly every one who has given any thought to the Congo at all has wondered how so vast and rich a territory could have been acquired by a nation as small as Belgium. True, another small European nation, Portugal, has huge colonies in Africa, but they are relics of her one-time power and greatness, whereas, until very recent years, Belgium had no colonial interests whatsoever. Do you realize that within the memory of many persons not yet past middle age there was no such country as the Congo? It was merely a blank space on the map with the legend "Unexplored" printed across it. It had never been traversed by a European. What lay up its rivers

was a mystery, a secret locked in the breast of Africa.

The story of the Congo is the story of two men, one brought up in a palace, the other in a poor-house. One was related to half the crowned heads in Europe; the other had no knowledge of his kin. The one styled himself Leopold II, King of the Belgians; the other was known as John Rowlands until he assumed the name of his American benefactor, Stanley. It would seem that the two men were as far as the poles apart. Yet Leopold of Belgium and Henry M. Stanley had this in common: both were iron-hard, determined, even ruthless; both were willing to take great chances; both were blessed with vision. That they should have been attracted to each other is not so surprising, perhaps, after all.

Leopold was an adventurer at heart. If he had not been born to a throne he would probably have been an explorer. As a boy he was a lover of maps, an omnivorous reader of books of travel. And because of this he wished to see his little country embark on overseas adventures, build up great tropical colonies as her neighbor, Holland, had done. He was convinced that Belgium, a



small, densely peopled country, must on the distant seaboard of the world create markets for her products and outlets for her surplus population, one of the many ambitious schemes formulated by his active brain being a project for founding a Belgian colony in Abyssinia.

In 1876, while Stanley was still in the heart of the Dark Continent, King Leopold summoned the leading geographers of Europe to a conference at Brussels, which resulted in an organization bearing the imposing title of "The International Association for the Exploration and Civilization of Africa." In order to accomplish the purpose suggested by its name, an international committee was formed, with subcommittees in the principal countries of Europe, but the only one of these which displayed much energy was the Belgian. East Africa was the first field to receive serious consideration from the Association, but the amazing accounts which Stanley sent to the "New York Herald" and the "Daily Telegraph" of his expedition down the Congo turned Leopold's attention to that region.

In 1878, shortly after his return from Africa, Stanley visited Brussels on the invitation of the

king, and as a result of the meeting a separate committee of the International Association, known as the Comité d'Etudes du Haut Congo, was formed. Shortly afterward this committee became the International Association of the Congo, which in its turn was the forerunner of the Congo Free State. In 1879 the king sent Stanley back to the Congo, where he spent the next four years as the agent of the association, which had now become a purely Belgian enterprise, making surveys, concluding treaties with the various chiefs, and establishing military posts and stations. It should be mentioned in passing, however, that Stanley did not immediately fall in with the Belgian monarch's schemes. Though he had carried the American flag on two of his expeditions, he was by birth an Englishman, and it was only after he had twice urged his own government to raise the British flag over the Congo, and had twice been rebuffed, that he accepted Leopold's invitation.

Though at this time the scramble for Africa had not yet set in, the great powers now began to scrutinize more closely the activities in that continent of the International Association, which,

as I have already remarked, had become to all intents and purposes a Belgian concern. The fact that the association had no status as a sovereign power, that it was operating without a license as it were, cast some doubts on the validity of its territorial claims and led Leopold to make determined efforts to secure for his enterprise international recognition.

Early in 1884 a series of diplomatic events brought the question to a head and resulted in the summoning of the Congress of Berlin, which was attended by the delegates of fourteen nations. This conference, which was presided over by the German chancellor, Count Bismarck, authorized the International Association of the Congo to exercise the functions of a sovereign state, the United States being the first power to grant it recognition. A conventional basin of the Congo was defined, and it was declared that in this basin "the trade of all nations shall enjoy complete freedom." It was further stipulated that the Congo and its affluents should be free to the vessels of all countries without discrimination, that trade monopolies should be prohibited, and that provision should be made for the sup-

pression of the slave-trade and for the protection of explorers, scientists, and missionaries.

In view of the assiduity with which Germany later sought "a place in the sun," it seems curious that so able a statesman as Bismarck should have concurred in handing over to Belgium the greatest prize that Africa had to offer. Perhaps like Daniel Webster, who asserted on the floor of Congress that he would not vote one cent of the nation's money to bring the Oregon Territory a mile nearer to Boston Common, the Iron Chancellor thought that the Congo was not worth having. Yet in the light of later events it is astounding that Germany should have let slip this chance to acquire the Congo for herself, for, with her great colonies on the Indian and Atlantic seabords of the continent, its possession would have made her mistress of Africa, with a territory stretching from ocean to ocean.

King Leopold now had the charter which he sought, guaranteed by the signatures of fourteen nations, and in the following year his somewhat anomalous position was regularized so far as his own country was concerned by the Belgian Parliament, which authorized him "to be the chief

of the state founded in Africa by the International Association of the Congo," adding, however, that "the union between Belgium and the new State of the Congo shall be exclusively personal." By the spring of 1885, therefore, the boy who studied maps had achieved a dual rulership, being both King of the Belgians and Sovereign of the Congo Free State. A territory of close on a million square miles, with upward of twelve million black inhabitants, had been turned over to him, lock, stock, and barrel, to do with as he chose.

A new life now began for the natives of the Congo, who, instead of dwelling in the state of care-free idleness to which they had been accustomed, were thenceforward subjected to innumerable exactions and oppressions. For Leopold, far from considering himself a trustee, a constitutional ruler, took the view that he was the actual owner of the country, the overlord of its people. No feudal baron ever asserted more despotic powers. All lands not actually lived on were claimed by the state; the natives could sell only to the state; and a native could not even leave his village without a special permit. In payment for his

services in promoting the enterprise, on which he had spent upward of two million dollars from his private purse, King Leopold took for himself a *domaine de la couronne* comprising the most valuable rubber region in the Congo which covered 112,000 square miles, or about eleven times the size of Belgium. That the Belgian ruler had the best interests of his country at heart there can be no denying, but he likewise always had an eye out for the main chance.

At this time the chief wealth of the Congo consisted of its millions of wild rubber-trees. This wealth Leopold and his business associates proceeded to exploit by the most merciless methods. The agents of the state, many of whom were unscrupulous adventurers, were granted tyrannical authority. And it was made amply clear to every agent that if he wished to retain his job he must see to it that his particular district yielded a specified amount of rubber. The methods by which this rubber was obtained did not worry the sovereign; all that interested him were the profits. As the agents were given a free hand, they devised a system of rubber collection which was as simple as it was effective. In other words, they employed



*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

A WHITE ANT-HILL AT ALBERTA

Some of these curious formations are thirty feet high





a method known to Americans as "passing the buck." Sending for the chiefs of their respective districts, they ordered them to deliver stipulated quantities of rubber latex at the government posts by certain dates under pain of imprisonment, flogging, or torture. Each chief, in turn, assessed his subjects, so that for the unhappy natives the Congo quickly became a hell on earth. If a native failed to supply his chief with the full quota of rubber required of him, that native was punished for his remissness by some one of the fiendishly ingenious tortures known to the African savage. And if the chief failed to deliver *his* quota to the local government agent he was subjected to punishments which his white superiors had either adopted outright from the black man or had improved on. Thousands of helpless natives were flogged into insensibility or died under the lash; other thousands were horribly mutilated, which explains why one frequently sees in the Congo to-day men and women minus a nose or an ear, a hand or a foot; scores were shot or hung so that their fellows might be spurred to greater industry by the grim object-lessons thus provided. Such were the "red rubber atrocities" which made the

names of Leopold and the Congo stink in the nostrils of decent men. Such were the methods encouraged by a government which had been created "for the civilization of Africa." Under the enlightened rule of Leopold II the people of the Congo Free State enjoyed about as much freedom as Roman galley-slaves; they were systematically civilized with the knife, the *kiboko*, the gallows, and the machine-gun. But black men's lives were cheap and rubber was valuable, and the king's coffers soon bulged with the gold that came rolling in. No wonder that people said that the luster of the pearls he gave to Cleo de Mérode was dimmed by blood-stains.

Though these appalling events were occurring in the heart of Africa, it was inevitable that rumors of them should reach the ears of civilization. Returning travelers, consuls, missionaries, brought back horrifying reports of what was going on along the dim reaches of the Congo. At first these reports were disbelieved and jeered at as the exaggerations or fabrications of sensation-mongers, but toward the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century the charges brought against the administration of the Free State be-

gan to assume serious and concrete form. Newspaper correspondents and trained investigators were despatched to the Congo. When their reports were published the repercussion was terrific. Europe and America were swept by a storm of indignation. The agitation was particularly vigorous in England and the United States, both governments threatening intervention. In 1904 Leopold, reluctantly yielding to the clamor, appointed a commission to visit the Congo and suggest reforms. This move temporarily allayed the agitation, but it was revived when word came from the Congo that the system complained of remained unaltered and that the "reforms" had not been carried out. Thereupon the British foreign minister, Sir Edward Grey, virtually served notice on Belgium that if she did not take prompt action to remedy conditions England would. The Congo Free State, he said, speaking on the floor of the House of Commons, had "morally forfeited every right to international recognition," and he quoted Lord Cromer's statement that the Congo system was the worst he had ever seen.

Though it should be clearly understood that at this time the Belgian Government had nothing

whatsoever to do with the administration of the Congo, the only connection between the two countries being their common sovereign, King Leopold had repeatedly asserted that upon his death the Free State would be bequeathed to Belgium. But it was now made amply clear to the Belgians that the king would have no Congo to bequeath to them unless his pernicious régime was promptly brought to an end. Otherwise it was certain to be taken over by some other nation or nations. By this time Leopold himself had been forced to the realization that his control of the Free State would no longer be tolerated and that the only hope of saving the great tropical territory to his country lay in an immediate and complete surrender of his claims. Accordingly he agreed to abdicate his African throne, and on November 28, 1907, the Belgian premier announced that the king had signed a treaty ceding the Congo Free State to Belgium. On the fourteenth of the following November the Free State ceased to exist. The next day the Belgian Government assumed the rights of sovereignty; the administrative control was surrendered to the newly created Ministry of the Colonies; from Boma to Lake Tanganyika,

from the Ubanghi to the Kasai, the blue flag with the yellow star was replaced by the red, yellow, and black standard of Belgium; and twelve million black folk dwelling in the heart of Africa breathed a prayer of thanksgiving.

The Congo's change in status from an independent nation to a Belgian colony was marked by a general reorganization and thorough housecleaning. Officials found guilty of cruelties or malpractices were summarily dismissed; the collection of rubber by the state was abolished; an equitable judicial system was established; and, most significant of all, a Commission for the Protection of Natives was established. The members of the commission, who represent the Government, commercial interests, Roman Catholic and Protestant missions, are appointed for life by the king. Its recommendations have been wise and practical and have done much to shape Belgium's colonial policy and to insure for the natives a square deal.

The colony is now divided into four great provinces of approximately the same size—the Congo-Kasai, the Equatorial, the Oriental, and the Katanga—each under a vice-governor who is directly

responsible to the governor-general at Boma. These provinces, in turn, are subdivided into districts and territories, under commissioners and administrators respectively. Under the terms of a post-war convention with Great Britain the districts of Ruanda and Urundi, together with the territory around Lake Kivu, all of which were formerly a part of German East Africa, were ceded to Belgium in 1919 and incorporated in the Congo. These new possessions, which are believed to be immensely rich, have a population of three million healthy and prosperous natives and an area of twenty thousand square miles. They possess one of the most delightful climates on the continent, are admirably adapted for cattle-raising—there is said to be a cow to every inhabitant—and, what is most important of all, are entirely free from the tsetse-fly.

Personal observation, supplemented by many talks with traders and mission workers, has convinced me that the Belgian colonial officials, though certainly not the equal of those found in British and Dutch colonies, are, on the whole, an efficient body of public servants, faithful and industrious in the performance of their duties,

Some of them are men of scholarly attainments who possess a scientific grasp of colonial problems and policies; most of them have shown a genuine understanding and sympathy for the native peoples committed to their charge. When it is remembered that these officials number, all told, barely two thousand, and that they are dealing with some twelve million blacks scattered over a region larger than Latin and Teutonic Europe put together, the immense difficulties of their task can be better realized.

That in the brief space of seventeen years they should have succeeded in establishing peace and order throughout this vast domain without the aid of a single white soldier; that they have ended tribal wars, checked cannibalism, greatly limited the pernicious influence of the witch-doctors, enormously improved all forms of communication and transportation, including the construction of some twelve hundred miles of railway; successfully combated many forms of tropical diseases; introduced modern methods of agriculture; and given justice and security to the natives, who never had so much as a bowing acquaintance with either of the two before, speaks volumes for their

energy, ability, and uprightness. So completely, indeed, have the injustices perpetrated under the old régime been done away with that government officials are now frequently charged with too great leniency toward the natives. If the Congo is not the black man's paradise, it is at any rate a land where he enjoys more freedom than almost anywhere else in Africa.

Trade and commerce in the Congo, and the exploitation of the colony's natural wealth, are virtually in the hands of sixteen major corporations, evidences of whose manifold activities are everywhere apparent. The fondness of the Belgians for saddling their corporations with sonorous but unwieldy names has resulted, for the purpose of saving time, in the employment of many curious contractions. Thus, the Société Nationale des Transports Fluviaux au Congo, which operates the larger river-steamers plying between Stanley Falls and Stanley Pool, is commonly referred to as the "Sonatra." The Compagnie Commerciale et Agricole d'Alimentation du Bas-Congo, which, in addition to its numerous other activities, operates hotels at Kinshasa, Thysville, and Matadi,



is known as the "A.B.C." The Compagnie des Chemins de Fer du Congo Supérieur aux Grands Lacs Africains, which controls rail and river transportation from Stanley Falls to Lake Tanganyika and the Katanga, is mercifully shortened to the "Grands Lacs." The Compagnie Géologique et Minière des Ingénieurs et Industriels Belges is always referred to as the "Geomines." But the name one hears most frequently is "Forminièr"—a contraction of Société Internationale Forestière et Minière du Congo.

The parent corporation of all, or nearly all, of the larger companies doing business in the Congo is the Société Générale, which was organized something over a century ago and is the oldest, or one of the oldest, joint-stock banks in Europe. It is far more than a mere banking institution, however, for its tentacles reach into every avenue of Belgian endeavor. Wherever any considerable amount of Belgian capital is invested, whether in railways or steamship-lines or plantations or mines, in that enterprise, it is safe to say, the Société Générale has a hand. It controls the powerful Banque pour l'Etranger, which has branches on four continents, and it was King Leopold's

instrument in financing the Free State. Barring the Huileries du Congo Belge, which is a purely British concern, it either dominates or has large holdings in every one of the great Congo corporations. The rail and river transport of the colony, its hotels, the output of gold, copper, diamonds, ivory, and rubber, are in its hands. In short, it bears much the same relation to the Belgian Government that the Bank of England does to that of Great Britain; it is a J. P. Morgan & Company, a National City Bank, a Guaranty Trust Company, and a Standard Oil Company rolled into one. It is commonly said of it that no one knows where the Government of Belgium ends and the Société Générale begins.

The Forminière is a child of the Société Générale. In the closing days of the Free State régime, King Leopold, eager for political as well as commercial reasons to interest American capital in his great African enterprise, sent for Thomas Fortune Ryan, the American financier, who was then on a holiday in Europe. In him the wily old monarch saw a useful ally, not only because of his influence in American banking circles, but because he had developed a highly profitable proc-

ess for extracting rubber from the guayule plant, which grows wild in Mexico—a process which might be successfully employed in the Congo. Between them they organized the Société Internationale Forestière et Minière du Congo, or, as it is generally known, the Forminière. Its object was the exploitation of the immense territory in the southwestern part of the colony which is watered by the Kasai. One half of the shares of the Forminière were assigned to the crown. The other half was divided into two parts. One of these was subscribed by King Leopold and the Société Générale; the other was taken in its entirety by Ryan, though he subsequently admitted to partnership the late Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, Harry Payne Whitney, Daniel Guggenheim, and John Hays Hammond. Upon the death of Leopold his share went to his heirs. When Aldrich died his interest was acquired by Ryan, who is now the principal American shareholder in this enormously profitable concern.

When, in 1911, the late Lord Leverhulme, the English soap-king, then Sir William Lever, obtained concessions from the Belgian Government for upward of a million square miles of palm-

forests in the Congo, he incorporated his enterprise as the Huileries du Congo Belge. The H.C.B., as it is known, is an enormous organization, its operations covering more territory than that of many a European country. For nearly a thousand miles the banks of the Congo and its tributaries are dotted with its refineries, mills, tanks, shops, factories, and storehouses, its model villages with their stores, hospitals, and schools. A fleet of river-boats flying the company's house-flag transport the oil and nut-kernels from the plantations in the interior to Kinshasa, where it is pumped into drums, and at Matadi other Leverhulme steamers are waiting to convey the drums to Port Sunlight, Lever Brothers' huge establishment on the coast of England. A subsidiary company of the H.C.B. is the Société d'Entreprises Commerciales au Congo Belge, or Sedec, which operates stores in all of the company's areas.

The third in importance of the great companies doing business in the Congo is the Union Minière, representing British and Belgian capital, which holds the concession for developing the fabulously rich copper fields of the Katanga. Under the direction of a large number of American mining



*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

Natives of the Katanga



Women of the Kasongo

IN THE HEART OF BLACK MAN'S AFRICA



engineers it has established huge plants at Elizabethville, Panda, and Kambove and has transformed the wilderness into bustling industrial centers, covered by a network of light railways and dotted with smelters, concentrating plants, derricks, and steam-shovels.<sup>1</sup>

The day is past when concessions in the Congo were given out to almost any one who asked for them. It is no longer necessary to employ this method of attracting foreign capital, for foreign investors are now fully awake to the importance of the country as a future center of world supply. Indeed, the further I traveled in the colony the greater became my amazement at the immensity and variety of its natural resources. In the southeast lies the Katanga, which is not only a huge copper area—probably the largest in the world—but has immense deposits of coal, tin, zinc, and other minerals as well. Though the surface of the Kasai, in the southwest, has been scarcely scratched, there is not the slightest doubt that American engineers are there developing one of the greatest diamond fields ever known. And it

<sup>1</sup> For a more complete account of the Congo companies see "My African Adventure," by Isaac Marcossou.

is to be questioned whether even the Californian and Australian gold-fields were richer than those in the northeastern Congo, where all the deposits are alluvial, every creek and river bed being a potential gold-mine. Millions of horse-power are going to waste upon the yet unharnessed rivers. The virgin forests of the colony could supply half the world with timber, just as they do supply it with soap, for the principal product of the soil, commercially, is the fruit of the oil palm. "But how about rubber?" I hear you ask. It is a curious fact that the product which wrecked the Free State, besmirched the name of a king, and nearly lost the Congo to Belgium is now of secondary importance, since it is more profitable to grow rubber on plantations in the Far East, where labor is plentiful and cheap, than to gather it wild in the Congo, where labor is scarce because of the native's disinclination to work. Though there is still plenty of rubber in the Congo, I was told that the natives, so vivid are their memories of their sufferings in the old, bad days, frequently kill a wild rubber-tree when they see one.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE SELVAGE OF SAVAGERY

AT Kigoma we were adopted by Amoni, a bright-eyed, soft-voiced, silent-footed Swahili boy who came from somewhere below the Rhodesian border. He attached himself to us in that casual fashion so characteristic of Africa but so astonishing to those who are accustomed to the ordeal of engaging domestic servants at home. While returning from our visit to Ujiji my hammock had broken down, and I was compelled to foot it the rest of the way into town. Striding along the sandy, shadeless road under a scorching sun, I noted out of the corner of my eye that a chocolate-colored youth, very neat and soldierly in his red tarboosh, belted linen jacket, and shorts, was following me a few paces to the rear. Motioning him to come alongside, I fell into conversation with him, for the appalling solitude of the African bush makes any companion welcome. He had acquired a serviceable though somewhat

sketchy knowledge of English at a mission school in Rhodesia, it seemed, while a British political officer in southern Tanganyika had trained him in the arts of valeting, laundering, cooking, and waiting on table. His employer, I gathered, had some years before gone to England, and when he returned to the bush he had brought a bride with him.

“When *bwana* go to England,” as Amoni quaintly phrased it, “he all himself, but when he come back there two of him.”

My questions soon elicited the fact that Amoni was temporarily out of employment, as his master and mistress had gone home on leave of absence. He had accompanied them to the coast and was now returning to his home in Rhodesia, where he would remain until it was time for him to start for Dar-es-Salaam to meet them.

“It is a long way from Nyangwara to Dar-es-Salaam,” I remarked. “At least nine hundred miles. How will you make the journey, up the lake by steamer to Kigoma and then down to the coast by train?”

“Oh, no, *bwana*,” was the matter-of-fact answer. “Train travel ver’ dear. I walk.”

“Walk?” I exclaimed incredulously. “Walk nine hundred miles? In the name of heaven, how long will it take you?”

“Oh, 'bout six week,” he replied, as casually as one would speak of walking from his home to the golf-club. “Mebbe not so much; mebbe little more. I hab friends on the way. If they polite to me I stop two-three days in their villages.”

Think of it! Think of walking nine hundred miles, through jungle, swamp, and forest, inhabited by savage beasts and still more savage men, in order to meet one's employer!

“I 'm looking for a boy,” I remarked. “How would you like to come with me for a few months instead of going home?”

“All right,” said Amoni, unemotionally. “I go.”

“But I 'm going a long way,” I warned him. “Right across Africa to the other ocean.”

“No matter. I go.”

“You 're not married, are you?” The inquiry seemed quite needless, for he did not look to be a day over eighteen.

“Yes, *bwana*,” was the astonishing reply. “I married two-three years. Hab ver' good wife.

Ver' pretty gel. Her fadder sultani of my vilage. She cost me ten pound."

"But what will your wife say when she learns that you are going so far away? She may not like to have you leave her for so long. You may be away for half a year."

"She not make rumpus, *bwana*," he confidently assured me. "She well trained gel. I buy her when she ver' young. And," he added ingenuously, "she not know I go till after I gone."

"Now"—for by this time we had reached the outskirts of Kigoma—"I wash *bwana*'s clothes, clean memsahib's shoes, fetch water, get bath ready, make beds, set table, fix up room."

All this for forty shillings a month! I engaged him on the spot, and he was with us, faithful, willing, and efficient, to our journey's end.

Lake Tanganyika has an evil reputation for the suddenness and violence of its storms. The longest lake in Africa—a lizard-shaped strip of bright blue water measuring four hundred miles from end to end—it is so narrow that the mountain ranges on either side form a sort of funnel through which the sudden tropic tempests, origi-

nating in the Urundi highlands, are blown southward with terrific force, lashing its ordinarily serene surface into a frenzy and jeopardizing the small craft that ply upon it. But on the night when we crossed not even the mildest of breezes marred the mirror-like smoothness of its surface, in which the stars were reflected as in a garden pool. Wrapped in our greatcoats and blankets—for even on the fifth parallel the nights can be uncomfortably cool—we lounged in our chairs on the forward deck of the *Duc de Brabant*, enthralled by the yarns of her skipper, a veteran Swedish mariner who had come out to the Congo during the old Free State days, until the Cross swung low to the morn.

Daybreak found us alongside the mole at Albertville, on which were drawn up a score or so of native convicts, shackled together by lengths of chain running from iron collar to iron collar and guarded by *askari*, who had been sent by the local administrator to carry our impedimenta ashore. The administrator was an able and energetic Belgian officer who, with his young and charming wife, had recently been transferred from the Katanga. They invited us to the resi-

dency to luncheon—the last civilized meal we were to have in many weeks—and when we took our departure they pressed upon me, as a souvenir of our visit, a grotesque wooden idol, four feet high, long venerated by a certain Congo tribe, which had been captured by my host during a punitive expedition. A hideously repellent object, it once looked down on scenes of bestiality and bloodshed from its place beneath a stray-thatched voodoo hut. Now its bulging eyes stare unseeingly at curious tourists and chattering school-children from its glass case in an American museum.

Albertville, the eastern gateway to the Belgian Congo, owes its existence to the war, being the terminus of the meter-gage railway which was hastily laid down during the early stages of the conflict to link Kabalo, on the Lualaba, with Lake Tanganyika, thereby facilitating the Belgian invasion of German East Africa. At the close of hostilities a miserable military camp, a base of supplies for the troops operating across the lake, in little more than half a dozen years it has become a well-laid-out, not unpleasant little town, its neat, substantially built brick bungalows pro-





AMONI

The bright-eyed, soft-voiced, silent-footed Swahili boy who accompanied us across the continent



viding a gratifying contrast to the whitewashed walls and corrugated iron roofs which usually characterize the architectural efforts of the white man in Central Africa. But the wharf, the railway-yards at the end of it, the trim dwellings on the terraced hillside, the thatched barracks of the native garrison beyond, these form but a fly-speck of civilization on the vast expanse of wilderness which stretches unbrokenly to the continent's western rim.

The biweekly train for Kabalo leaves at four o'clock in the morning, which makes it necessary for the intending traveler to get up at three. We were not put to this inconvenience, however, for, there being no hotel in Albertville, we had the alternatives of sitting up all night or sleeping in the train. If you have never attempted to sleep in a Central African train, with the thermometer standing at 110 at midnight, the leather cushions soaked with perspiration, unnamable stench rising from an adjacent swamp, and man-eating mosquitos droning about your head like squadrons of airplanes, then you have escaped an experience which no one who has endured it is likely to forget.

The railway from Albertville to Kabalo follows

the tortuous course of the Lukuga, the journey being accomplished between dawn and dusk of a single day. The first few hours in the narrow valley, where the car-window frames fascinating pictures of a silvery stream winding through the tropical jungle of one's imagination, complete with monkeys, parrots, snakes, and crocodiles, and where the traveler new to Africa obtains his first sight of natives clad only in necklaces and smiles, go by quickly enough, but the rest of the day consists of bumping along in a hot, dusty, and extremely uncomfortable railway-carriage about the size of an old-fashioned horse-drawn street-car.

Yet, despite its discomforts, the journey is always interesting—a great motion-picture, as it were, of life on the Last Frontier. At the little stations in the bush at which the train halts to take on fuel, for which the wood-burning locomotives seem to have an insatiable appetite, one encounters all the types of the pioneering white man: civil administrators in starched white linen, their pipe-clayed helmets adorned with the coat-of-arms of Belgium; army officers in faded khaki, their *fourragères* and medal ribbons denoting service in Flanders or the East African cam-

paign; Greek and Portuguese traders, sallow-faced and furtive-eyed; prospectors and ivory-hunters, bare of arm and knee, their bronzed skins and thorn-torn garments speaking of long months spent in the solitude of the bush; and always the priests of the great missionary orders—Trappists, Jesuits, Redemptionists, Benedictines, Dominicans, Capuchins, White Fathers—picturesque, patriarchal figures with their long beards, their pipe-clayed helmets, and their snowy robes. Regard them well, these bold and hardy men, for they form the skirmish-line of civilization.

Because, as a war correspondent, I had seen much service with the Belgian army during the early years of the Great War, because I bore letters of introduction and recommendation from the highest officials of King Albert's government, and because on numerous occasions I had been outspoken in my championship of the Belgians, I went to the Congo expecting to be very cordially received. And from the officials of the colony I received nothing but kindness and assistance, but the non-official residents, in a very large number of cases at least, treated us with ill-concealed unfriendliness and suspicion. That we

were not welcome in the Congo soon became painfully apparent. My questions were frequently met with curt and sometimes contemptuous replies; Mrs. Powell was not always treated with the consideration which a white woman traveling in innermost Africa has the right to expect from white men; and on one occasion, when I asked permission of a young Belgian planter to take a photograph of the *tepay* in which he had come in from the bush, he refused me with a storm of oaths and in the presence of his native bearers.

This unfriendly attitude became so pronounced as the days passed that at length I demanded of a Belgian its reason.

"We don't like you English," he replied bluntly. "After our troops had driven the Germans out of East Africa you took it away from us at the Peace Conference. You have shown that you are not our friends."

"But we are not English," I protested. "We are Americans."

At that he hesitated, but only for a moment.

"We have no love for you either," he blurted. "It is your American financiers who have tried



*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

STITCHING THE SELVAGE OF SAVAGERY

Civilization is striding across Africa in seven-league boots. Already the natives of Equatoria fashion their simple garments on American sewing-machines



to pauperize us by depreciating the franc. To-day it is so low that our money won't buy anything, and trade in the Congo is almost at a standstill. And, not satisfied with that, you are demanding that we pay you war debts which we may owe you legally but not morally."

I mention this incident, unimportant in itself, not because I believe for a moment that it reflects the attitude of the thoughtful elements among the Belgian people, but because it throws an interesting side-light on the mental processes of Belgians living in the African bush, where reliable sources of information are few and where men are prone to harbor grudges because there is nothing else to occupy their minds. Personally, I can quite understand the bitter resentment with which the Belgian colonials who fought in the terrible East African campaign saw the vast, rich territory which they had done so much to conquer appropriated by their powerful neighbor. And I can also understand the bitterness of these same men, the buying-power of their meager incomes shrunk by the fall of the franc, when they read in the papers of America's amazing post-war prosperity and extravagance.

Ever since leaving Dar-es-Salaam we had been warned against Kabalo, the little transshipping station on the Lualaba where the traveler changes from train to river-steamer, and it did not belie its sinister reputation. Set in a small clearing between the river and the jungle, inhabited by a handful of unfortunate Belgian officials and Portuguese traders and by some hundreds of natives, it is maintained only by a perpetual and apparently hopeless struggle against the encroachments of a peculiarly dense and rank vegetation. It is notorious all over the Congo for its mosquitos, which are of the *anopheles* or fever-bearing type, it being said in grim jest that a prisoner has never been able to make good his escape from the local jail because of the trail he leaves in passing through them.

In the course of my peregrinations up and down the world circumstances have frequently compelled me to seek shelter for the night in some queer places. I have slept in Alaskan bunk-houses, in Navajo cliff-dwellings, in Kaffir kraals, beneath the black tents of Bedouin nomads, and in Turkoman khans; but I shall always look upon the Hôtel de Bruxelles at Kabalo as the gem of

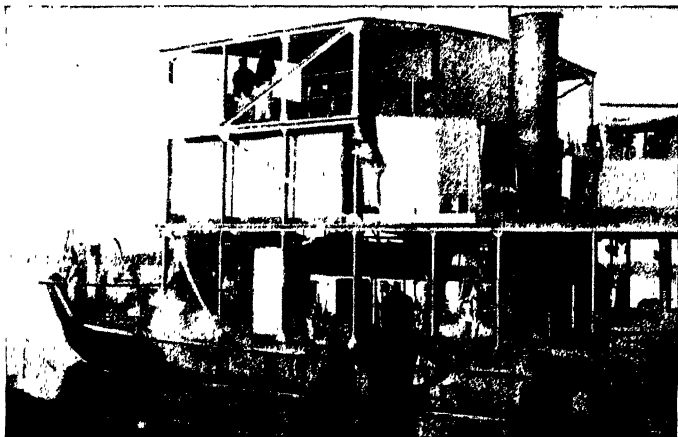


the collection. Because it is fairly typical of the accommodation one must be prepared for in the Eastern Congo, it deserves a paragraph of description. Of course it isn't a hotel in the generally accepted sense of the word. Rest-house would, perhaps, describe it more accurately were it not for the fact that by no possibility could one obtain any rest within its walls. The Greek who runs it told me that before coming to Kabalo he had been a barber in New York City. After I saw the hair-cut that he gave my traveling-companion, Barton, it was easy to understand why he had buried himself on the Lualaba. He evidently thought it wise to put as many miles as possible between his enraged victims and himself. But at Kabalo he can do his tonsorial worst without fear of the consequences, for he is the only barber between Elizabethville and Stanley Falls, a distance of about fifteen hundred miles.

The hostelry which he conducts in the interims between barbering and bartering—for he is also the agent of a trading company—consists of a long, low, mud-walled structure built on the lines of a cow-shed, containing half a dozen brick-floored cells, called bedrooms only by courtesy,

which open on a walled compound. The walls of these cells, from which the plaster was falling in chunks as a result of the dampness, provided a sort of public playground for a number of green lizards, several varieties of spiders, some of them poisonous, and numerous cockroaches the size of mice (ask any one who has been in the Congo if you think this is an exaggeration); huge black bats clung to the raftered ceiling like umbrellas hung up to dry; the brick floor was dotted with small mounds which looked like piles of red sand but which proved upon closer inspection to be teeming masses of red ants; the stained and foul-smelling mattresses on the rickety iron beds were alive with small and very active insects known to scientists as *Cimex lectularius* and to others by a shorter and less elegant name.

Never having been particularly interested in the study of entomology, particularly at night and in strange surroundings, I ordered Amoni to set up our camp-beds on the veranda. But my plan to sleep in the open was promptly vetoed by the local administrator, a fever-stricken Belgian who looked as though he were a promising candidate for the little weed-grown cemetery at



The steamers on the upper river are small, slow, and none too clean



A detachment of native troops with their wives waiting to board the steamer

ALONG THE LUALABA



the edge of the town, who warned us that exposure to the miasma which rises at night from the surrounding swamps would result in our contracting a peculiarly virulent form of influenza, while the mosquitos were so voracious that if we insisted on sleeping out of doors we would almost certainly come down with fever. By way of clinching his argument, he added that even if we were willing to risk disease it was highly advisable to sleep behind closed doors because of prowling lions, one of which had paid a midnight visit to the hotel compound the week before and carried off a goat. So I compromised by having the beds set up within doors, though leaving the doors open. But the droning of mosquitos, the whir of bats, and the eery laughter of scavenging hyenas made sleep out of the question. And twice during the night I heard, not far away, the reverberating roar of lions. Whereupon I would stretch out my hand in the darkness to feel the cool steel of the Springfield .30 which lay beside my bed. It was very comforting.

To the traveler from East Africa, unaccustomed to great rivers, the first sight of the Lualaba, as the upper Congo is called, comes

as a revelation. Although still comparatively near its source, the river is already of imposing width, flowing like smooth dark glass between banks green with ferns and black with forest—the mysterious black forest of the Congo. It is only seventy-five miles from Kabalo to Kongolo, where one changes to the train again, and the little stern-wheel river-steamer makes the downstream journey in about six hours, always provided, of course, it does not go aground on a sand-bar or run afoul of the great floating islands of papyrus which form a sort of inland Sargasso Sea, making travel on the upper reaches of the Lualaba extremely hazardous and uncertain.

Above Kabalo, particularly in the swampy regions near Lake Kisali, these masses of floating vegetation, some of them many acres in extent, are so dense that navigation is frequently interrupted for weeks at a time. Shortly before our arrival at Kabalo, I was told, a Belgian trader, having urgent business down the river and finding that the steamers were not running, essayed to make the journey in a *piroque* with native paddlers. But his frail craft was caught between two great floating islands, which in that rapid

current move with astonishing swiftness, he and his crew, without food, tormented by mosquitos and flayed by the sun, being held prisoners for four days by the papyrus.

Kongolo, though neither so unhealthy nor so unpleasant as Kabalo, nevertheless is very far from being a tropical paradise. Built on the slopes of a low bluff at a bend in the river, with the jungle coming down to its back doors, it consists of a dozen trading-stores—"factories" they are called in Central and West Africa—a score or so of not uncomfortable bungalows occupied by government officials, the barracks of the black troops who compose the garrison, some small houses of nondescript material where dwell the European mechanics employed on the railway and the river-boats, and, of course, the inevitable Greek hotel, all strung along a single treeless road, ankle-deep in sand and white-hot beneath the pitiless sun.

Here, as elsewhere in the Congo, the local hotel, if one can dignify it by such a name, is run in conjunction with a trading-establishment, the Hellenic proprietor and his assistant dividing their time between selling trade-goods to natives

over a counter at one end of its main room and bottled goods to European customers over a bar at the other end. At the back of the bar-room, giving on a sort of barn-yard, were four small, foul-smelling cubicles, each containing a dubious-looking bed, a broken chair, and, set on an upended packing-case, a galvanized iron bucket in lieu of wash-bowl and pitcher. These cubicles were flatteringly referred to by the proprietor as sleeping-rooms, though it was hard to imagine how their unfortunate occupants could hope to obtain any sleep, what with chattering native servants, a collection of domestic animals, a raucous phonograph, the interminable clink of glasses, and the raised voices of inebriated patrons.

There was no other hotel, and we had no tents; but Barton and I, setting out on a tour of investigation, discovered not far away a house in process of construction. It was still minus doors and windows, and the plaster on its walls had not yet dried, but it had a roof that would keep out the rain, and, most important of all, it was clean. So we rented it from its owner for the duration of our stay in Kongolo. As a place of residence it



left much to be desired, but we had our own beds, mosquito-nets, and camp-chairs; and, under the watchful eye of Amoni, our portable bath-tub was kept filled by natives who brought the water in petroleum-tins from the river.

Though from 10 A.M. onward the bar of the hotel was always lined with bronzed, bearded, broad-hatted, boisterous men—ivory-buyers and prospectors in from the bush to dispose of their products or replenish their supplies—the real business of drinking did not begin until sunset, when it started in earnest, so that by nine o'clock most of the customers were noisily, and frequently offensively, tight. Our first evening in Kongolo was enlivened by a fracas between a trader and his wife, both recently out from Belgium. When the lady reproached her husband for coming home intoxicated he told her that the only reason he had come home at all was because all the other places were closed, whereupon she expressed her resentment at this ungallant speech by hurling a lighted lantern at his head. He attempted to defend himself with a chair, but his irate spouse summarily ended the argument by chasing him into the jungle with an ax.

The following night there was a row between the Greek hotel-keeper and an Italian carpenter, the former taking umbrage because the latter had protested against being kept waiting three hours for his dinner. As the Italian was merely a steady boarder, paying for his meals by the month and in advance, the Greek and his friends unceremoniously threw him into the road after breaking a bottle over his head—by way of revenge, they explained, for Italy's seizure of Corfu. The Greek knew, of course, that he would not lose business by this little pleasantry, for the very good reason that there was no other eating-place in town, and that the assaulted and battered customer must smother his resentment or starve.

Sordid incidents, these, yet illustrative of the conditions which exist in these remote outposts on the selvage of civilization, where life is hard, relaxations few, the climate inconceivably trying, and the hand of the law none too strong. For the Congo is still in the frontier stage of existence, and conditions there must, in all fairness, be judged by frontier standards. A hard-living, hard-drinking, rough-mannered folk, these Congo pioneers, but so, I imagine, were Simon Ken-

ton and Daniel Boone and Davy Crockett. And, like those heroes of our own frontier, they are waging a war against savagery, they are clinching the rivets of empire, they are opening up a continent to civilization.

## CHAPTER VII

### DRUMS ON THE LUALABA

**I**N the Congo boats and trains rarely make close connections, so that the traveler frequently has to spend a week or more at some miserable transshipping station in the wilderness. This was the case at Kongolo, a fever-haunted, mosquito-ridden outpost on the Lualaba, where the interval of waiting for the next steamer promised to be very dismal indeed. But the day after our arrival the English manager of a trading-company took pity on us.

“A few of us are going down the river on a picnic to-morrow,” he remarked. “Would you care to come along? It might help to pass the day.”

No invitation was ever accepted with greater alacrity, for the word “picnic” conjured up visions of a cool sail beneath the awnings of a trim launch, a snowy table-cloth spread on a green and shady hillside, sandwiches, cold chicken,





A RIVER TOWN

At the right is one of the communal dwellings, some of them a quarter of a mile long and housing scores of families, peculiar to Central Africa

stuffed olives, thermos bottles filled with cocktails and lemonade. But a picnic on the Lualaba, as we were to discover, bears scant resemblance to the same form of recreation on, say, the Hudson or the St. Lawrence.

Our destination was a small trading-post kept by a South African some miles down river in the bush. In order to reach it before the terrific heat of midday set in, we started when the sun was still low on the eastern horizon. Preceded by a long file of porters bearing on their heads camp-chairs, tinned provisions, bottled water, and our rifles—for in Central Africa there is always the possibility of encountering big game—we followed a narrow trail which, after winding for half a mile or so through grass higher than our heads, came to an abrupt end beside the river, where a forty-foot *pirogue*, as the native dugout is called, manned by a dozen naked, stalwart paddlers, was drawn up on the sloping shore.

Some of these *pirogues* are tremendous affairs, sixty, eighty, even a hundred feet long, but extremely narrow in proportion to their length, being hewn from the trunks of forest giants. The best time to see them is on the occasion of a

reception for some high Belgian official or a big palaver, when the paramount chiefs come in from hundreds of miles around, their state *pirogues* frequently being propelled by as many as half a hundred paddlers apiece. Sometimes there is a little canopy of leaves or grass, supported on four posts, amidships, beneath which the traveler lounges in his long chair with the paddlers in the stern and his luggage in the bow, for in Africa the European quickly learns that for olfactory reasons it is wiser to keep sweating natives to leeward of him. Going down-stream the current is usually so swift that the paddlers have to give only an occasional stroke to keep steerage-way on the canoes, but when they really work—and they do sometimes, particularly when meal-time is approaching—it is amazing how the clumsy craft travels over the water, the natives bending to their paddles like Roman galley-slaves. As a rule the paddlers are merry fellows and chant interminably the curious native refrains, but sometimes, with the perversity so characteristic of African natives, the whole crew will suddenly turn sullen for no apparent reason. This sort of thing rarely happens in British terri-



tory, where unruly natives are brought up with a round turn; but in the Congo, where the black man has been pampered and spoiled, travelers are frequently held up for days at a time by stubborn or mutinous crews. In a land of immense distances, where virtually all travel is by water, and where European stations are few and far between, such lack of discipline is often a serious matter.

One of our hosts was a young Belgian named Heymann, a professional ivory-hunter with sixty-four notches on his elephant-rifle, and, one of the finest types of frontiersman I have ever known. As it was still early, and as we had ample time to reach our destination before noon, he suggested that we combine business with pleasure by going hippopotamus-hunting; for in the Congo, where meat of any kind is scarce and cattle are virtually unknown, the carcass of a hippo always finds eager buyers among the natives, frequently netting the hunter a thousand francs or more. Hippos are very plentiful on the Lualaba, and Heymann made the suggestion as casually as the host at a picnic at home might suggest to his guests that they put in the morn-

ing fishing. That we agreed with enthusiasm to the proposal goes without saying. Accordingly the stem of the *pirogue* was headed for the opposite shore; a native, squatting in the bow with a keg-shaped drum between his knees, began to thump the taut skin rapidly, *roum-roum-roum, roum-roum-roum*; and the crew, taking their stroke from the tempo of the drum, drove their paddles into the water with a force and precision which sent the great canoe leaping across the river like a racing-shell at New London. I might mention, parenthetically, that drums are always carried in *pirogues* when speed is required, just as they are used to speed up the workers in other forms of native industry, for your African will labor till he drops if inspired by their rhythmic thunder.

The drum, indeed, plays a very important part in the life of Central Africa, for to the native it is a gramophone, an orchestra, a radio, a telegraph, a telephone in one. Over a region as large as Europe it is as commonly used for purposes of communication as Alexander Graham Bell's invention is in the United States. On one occasion, while in a canoe on the Congo above Stanley





Every village has its town drum set under a thatched hut of its own



When the climatic conditions are propitious the big drums can be heard for sixty miles

DRUMS ON THE LUALABA

Falls, we heard, from far in the distance, the *boom . . . boom . . . boom* of a drum, the drummer evidently employing a code resembling our own Morse. My natives promptly ceased their paddling and listened intently; then one of them seized the drum lying in the bottom of the canoe and with a few quick beats answered the mysterious message that was coming to us out of the unknown.

“What are they saying?” I asked Amoni.

“It is one man from all same village like these people,” he explained. “He long way off on ’nother ribber, twenty-thirty mile away. He say please tell him fambly fishing is ver’ good so he not come home till to-morrow.”

It was precisely as though an American business man were to call up his wife by telephone and tell her not to keep dinner waiting for him as he was spending the night in town.

Every Congo village has its town drum, usually a great hollowed log, sometimes three feet in diameter and a dozen feet long, set on blocks under a thatched hut of its own. These town drums are used for communicating with neighboring villages, for sending out summons to

dances, feasts, tribal councils, and mobilization for war, for broadcasting news of every kind. If the climatic conditions are propitious, particularly at nightfall, when a sudden hush falls over the great forest, they can be heard, so it is asserted, for sixty miles; it is a well-known fact that government radio messages are frequently outstripped by messages transmitted by the native drums, for the radio service in the Congo, as I discovered, is by no means to be depended upon.

So highly has this means of communication been developed—it is said that certain of the African tribes, notably the Yorubas of Southern Nigeria, can actually *talk* their language on the drum—and so universal is its use, that nothing happens among the white population which is not promptly disseminated among the natives. Time and again, in the course of our journey down the Congo, we found that the inhabitants of the wood-posts at which the steamer stopped for fuel had been apprised of our coming and knew all about us (this I learned from Amoni); that I spent a portion of each day tapping out strange characters on a piece of paper by means

of a mysterious *clickety-click* machine; that Barton carried a large black box in which he caught and imprisoned the images of people; and that my wife had a shiny magic tube which, when she pressed a button, could turn night into day. Nothing escapes the notice of your African native, who is as fond of disseminating trivial news by means of the drum as women in small communities at home are fond of gossiping over the telephone.

The speed and accuracy with which these drum messages are sent, sometimes over long distances, is astonishing. For example, when we arrived at the point on the river where we were to leave the *pirogues* and follow a trail through the bush to the trading-post, we were astounded to find the trader awaiting us with a hammock and bearers for every member of the party. He told us that he had known of our coming since early morning, though no canoe had preceded us down the river and there was no means of communication by land. How had he learned that we had been added to the number of his invited guests? By the drum, of course. And the only mistake in his information was that we were English,

which was not surprising, for in the Congo Americans are unknown, every European who is not a *Bula Matadi* (Belgian) being an *Ighirees* (Englishman).

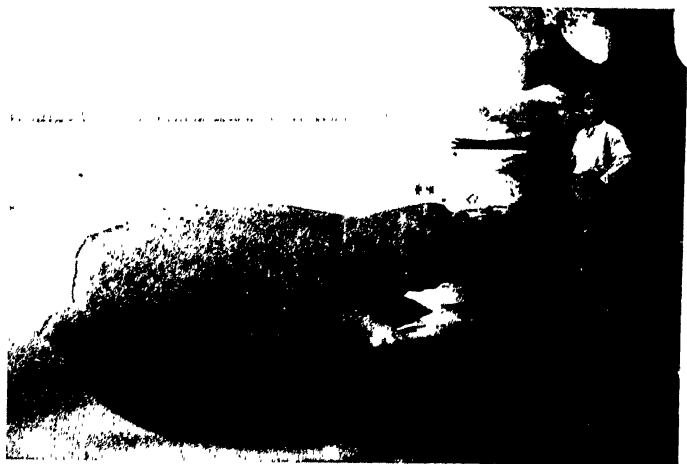
Here is another instance. The manager of a British trading-corporation in Kongolo received a cablegram from the company's head office summoning him to London. One of his servants told a friend the news, and the drums spread it still farther, and the next morning the assistant manager, buying ivory in a bush village two hundred miles away, was informed by his head boy that he had better return to Kongolo without delay as his chief was leaving. Again, the details of the Belgian victories in German East Africa were common gossip among the natives in the market-places of every river-town before they were known to the governor-general at Boma.

When we had swept about half a dozen miles down the swiftly flowing river, the paddles rising and falling, rising and falling, to the rhythmic thunder of the drum, Heymann shouted an abrupt command, which the man at the steering-paddle acknowledged by swinging the *pirogue* straight





Embarking in the pirogue at Kongolo for the hippo hunt—



And what we were hunting

HIPPO HUNTING ON THE LUALABA



for the jungle-bordered bank, with the intention, seemingly, of crashing into it head on. But what appeared from a little distance to be a solid wall of vegetation proved to be but a leafy screen, through which we burst our way into the limpid waters of a narrow, tortuous creek, bordered on either side by broad beds of bright green papyrus. It is on this succulent plant that the hippo feeds, though under cover of darkness he ventures farther from his native element, the river, raiding the mealie-fields and potato-patches of the native farmers along the bank, which after one of these nocturnal forays look as though a fleet of whippet-tanks had rolled over them. Upon the approach of a potential enemy the great amphibian, if cut off from the water, will stand absolutely motionless, the only target he presents being a small patch of neutral-colored hide or, perhaps, his little, unwinking, red-rimmed eyes, all but indistinguishable amid the wilderness of reeds.

Though ordinarily the most inoffensive of animals, the hippo may become distinctly dangerous when wounded or if disturbed with its young. By way of illustration, Heymann told me that on one occasion, when going down the

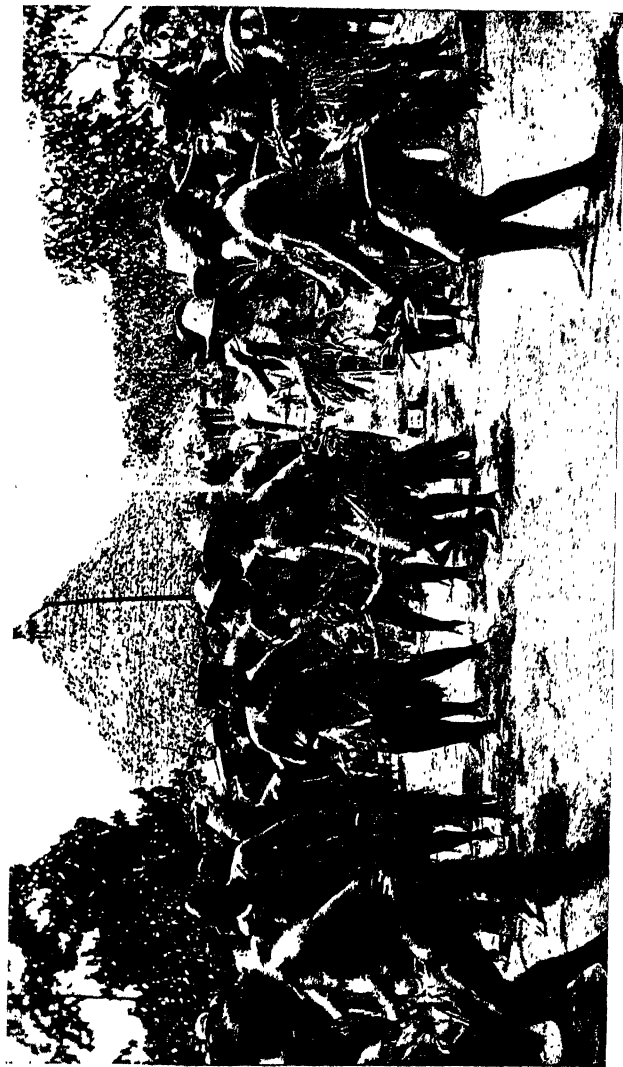
river in an iron *balanrière*, he was attacked by a hippo of whose presence he was not even aware, the monster coming up under the boat, capsizing it, and driving its great tusks through the metal hull as though it were so much cardboard. Another hippo story was told me by the young wife of an American missionary at Bolenge, on the Upper Congo. A few months before our visit to the mission station she, with her two small children, had accompanied her husband on a tour of inspection up a tributary of the Congo, making the journey in the mission launch. One morning, her husband being absent on a visit to a nearby village, she was seated on the deck of the launch, which was moored alongside the bank, while her children were playing on a spit of sand, which projected into the river a hundred yards away. Suddenly she was startled by a chorus of piercing screams. Their cause was apparent at a glance. Two hippos, emerging silently from the river, had cut the children off from the bank. Realizing that she could not hope to reach them in time, she snatched up her husband's rifle and, before the terrified youngsters fully realized their peril, had driven off the monsters with a fusillade of well-directed shots.

Though we made our way up the creek for several miles, beneath a sun so hot that the barrel of my rifle burned my hand when I touched it, we saw no hippos, though our presence was more than once betrayed by a sudden snort, like that of a startled horse, or the rustle caused by a ponderous body moving cautiously amid the papyrus. But late that night, when we were returning to Kongolo, we suddenly found ourselves in the midst of a whole herd of hippos, judging from the snorts that came from the darkened waters all about us—a somewhat trying experience when in a frail canoe on a swiftly flowing river without enough light to take effective aim.

The sun had passed the meridian when we beached the *pirogue* on a small semicircle of sand, hemmed in by tall grass, whence a narrow trail wound like a snake into the jungle. Awaiting us with hammocks and bearers was our host, the trader, an Englishman from the Transvaal, who had spent his life in Africa and was at home among every tribe between Nigeria and Zululand. The hammocks were very welcome, for by now the heat had become intolerable and portions of the trail were under water as the result of recent rains. For three quarters of an hour our porters

stumbled and struggled through dense, tall grass; then we emerged abruptly into a good-sized clearing. Bordering the clearing were twin rows of native dwellings, the conical wattle and daub huts of Equatorial Africa; and in the center of the open space, which had been baked by the sun and pounded by countless black feet until it had the hardness of asphalt, stood the trading-post itself—a small, square structure, roofed with grass, its thick mud walls coated with dirty white-wash, a broad veranda running all around. At one end of the veranda a trio of Europeans, their shirts open at the neck, their skins tanned to the color of a much-smoked meerschaum, were drinking tepid beer and playing cutthroat bridge. At the other end a battered gramophone, set on an upended packing-case which had once contained a well-known brand of gin, and surrounded by a circle of naked, spellbound savages, was bleating “Yes, We Have No Bananas” in blatant denial of the fact that the clearing was fringed with banana-trees, thousands and thousands of them, heavy with their yellow fruit.

The factory, as a trading-post is called in Equatoria, contained but two rooms. One, judg-



DANCE MAD!

The broad space between the huts was alive with a frenzied mass of whirling, leaping, howling humanity, their sweating bodies gleaming like bronzes in a museum





ing from the iron camp-bed with its closely drawn mosquito-net, was the trader's sleeping-quarters, its plastered walls papered with pictures of actresses, race-horses, and prize-fighters cut from the English weeklies. The other room was piled to the ceiling with trade-goods—printed cottons and mercerized handkerchiefs in the startling patterns so dear to the African heart, copper and brass wire to be fashioned into native jewelry, salt, brass anklets, a small stock of agricultural implements, axes, shovels, and hoes, strings of the shell currency known as cowries, thirty strings of which was the prevailing market-price for a wife, so our host told us, and “five-feet-of-gas-pipe” trade-guns.

It was astonishing to see the volume of business transacted at so small a post, which must have had, however, a fairly populous hinterland to draw from, for all day long a stream of women issued from the encircling bush, each bronze Venus poising on her head a huge basket brimming with the produce she wished to dispose of. After the loads had been duly inspected, weighed, and paid for by the trader's one-eyed Arab headman, the dusky venders, tightly clutching the cop-

pers they had received in payment, invaded the store to do their shopping. Though they wore "nothing much before and rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind," their manners were those of women shoppers everywhere, the chattering, giggling, jostling throng reminding me of bargain-day crowds in department-stores at home.

A full moon invariably provides the Congo native with an excuse for dancing; and we were fortunate in that the moon was like a great round dish of silver while we were on the Lualaba. Since early morning the notification that a dance would be held had been broadcasted to the surrounding villages by means of the great town drum. Toward sunset we heard a strange bellowing noise, far out in the jungle, along the western road. Now and then it stopped, but a few minutes later it would break out again, coming from some nearer point. It was some time before we could ascertain what it was, much less know the business in hand. Eventually we learned that it was a *dingwinti* drum. Presently we heard it at the entrance to the village. We went to see what was on. A man was sitting on the ground with the bellowing instrument between his knees. Its

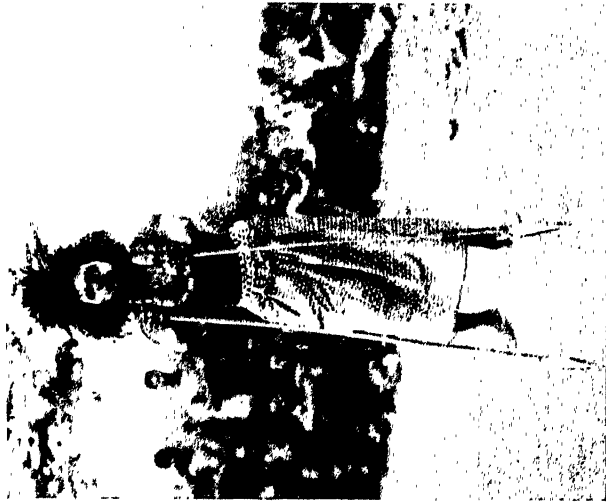
construction was novel but simple: a wedge-shaped piece of palm, perhaps three feet across, hollowed until its sides were scarcely thicker than parchment and sprinkled with pellets of crude rubber, which adhered to the fingers of the player, thus producing the long-drawn, resonant moan. It was an impressive preface to the fantastic performance that was about to begin.

By the time the blood-red sun had touched the western rim of the jungle fully half a thousand natives, slipping silently from out of the unknown, had gathered in the open space in the center of the village. Both men and women were quite naked, save for narrow breech-clouts and strings of colored beads. They came quietly and seated themselves in a great circle. Suddenly there was a wild outburst of *coee-e-e-es* and a still more frenzied throbbing of the drum. A witch-doctor had arrived.

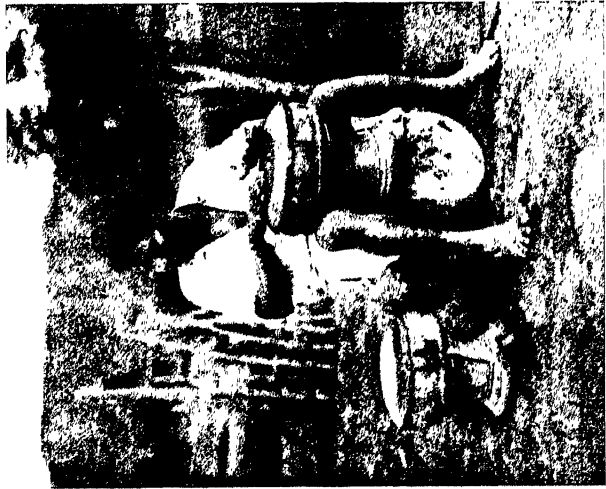
Picture a tall and muscular negro with a smile that would frighten a bulldog. His face was daubed with white clay in rings and streaks and patches, like a circus clown's. Thrown like a cape over his shoulders was an animal skin; from waist to knees he was clad in a sort of kilt

of bark-cloth, heavily embroidered in beads and with a thick, bright-colored fringe, the final touch to this curious garment being provided by the tail of a leopard hanging down behind. Swinging from his neck was a fantastic collection of beads, teeth, claws, charms, and amulets, and on his head was an enormous bonnet of monkey-fur and parrot-feathers, the latter sticking out in every direction. Inconceivably hideous and grotesque, he looked like the creature of a nightmare, the phantasm of a disordered brain. Behind him came his assistants, a whole troupe of them, men and women, painted and befeathered like their leader. Then the musicians put in an appearance. Some of them had small, zither-like instruments called *bichis* which give off a metallic, twanging sound not unlike that of a banjo; others carried long-handled rattles of basketry containing small wooden balls or fruit-stones; and two of the party were provided with dance-drums, shaped like hour-glasses and the size of nail-kegs, their tops covered with tightly stretched skins. As they unlimbered their instruments they reminded me for all the world of a negro jazz orchestra tuning up for a dance at an





The medicine-man advanced to the center of the circle, with a curious running shamble, a spear in either hand



The dance-drums were shaped like hour-glasses, their tops sprinkled with pellets of crude rubber which adhered to the fingers of the players

MAKING BIG MEDICINE IN THE BUSH

American country-club. Judging by the elaborate preparations and the presence of the witch-doctor, the dance was to be of a ceremonial rather than a purely social character. Inquiry elicited the fact that the villagers held a grudge of some sort against the inhabitants of a neighboring town and that the witch-doctor had been employed to lay on a curse which would wither their crops for the ensuing year, or ruin their fishing, or some similar deviltry. In fact, he confided to the trader that he purposed making very big medicine indeed if sufficient remuneration were forthcoming.

When the audience had assumed the proportions which he deemed befitting his dignity, the witch-doctor began to dance, his advent heralded by a sudden ruffle of the drums. He advanced to the center of the circle with a curious running shamble, a broad-bladed spear in one hand, a long white wand in the other. Thrusting and feinting with his weapons, his bepainted countenance distorted by horrible grimaces, he came on until his grinning face was within a foot of my own, fell back in simulated panic, then repeated the performance all over again, varying

it this time by a series of leaps, shakings and gyrations. He had as complete control of his abdominal muscles as the Ouled-Nails who perform the *danse du ventre* in the cabarets of Biskra; his footwork would have aroused the envy of an American buck-and-wing artist. Had he been in the United States in minstrel days he could have made a fortune for Lew Dockstader or Primrose and West.

At this point there occurred an unexpected and pleasing interruption. It was provided by the trader's white bull-terrier, an intelligent animal who evidently viewed with distinct disapproval the caperings of this human brute. He expressed his disapproval by proceeding to attach himself with great enthusiasm to the posterior portion of the witch-doctor's anatomy. Great excitement ensued. It was almost as good as a Democratic National Convention. With considerable difficulty the dog was pried loose. The witch-doctor was wounded in his feelings and elsewhere. The dance halted until the one had been salved with money and the other with wet mud. The natives plainly sympathized with the witch-doctor. I sympathized with the dog.



Faster and faster throbbed the drums until they sounded like the roll of distant thunder. Wilder and wilder grew the caperings of that fantastic figure in its paint and feathers. Carried away with excitement, the onlookers, now six deep about the circle, vented their emotions vocally, like negroes at a revival meeting, the men with yells and war-whoops, the women with strange, high-keyed trills. They shook the little wicker rattles that they carried until they sounded like a hail-storm falling on a tin roof; they clapped their hands in chorus as Southern darkies pat juba. When darkness fell they built a great fire, a mighty roarer, fed with logs the size of a man. Now, by twos and threes and fours, the onlookers began to join in the dance, until the broad space between the huts was alive with a frenzied mass of whirling, leaping, howling humanity, men and women, their white eyeballs rolling wildly, their sweating bodies gleaming in the red glow of the firelight like bronzes in a museum. Right through the night the savage orgy frothed and bubbled along, the dancers crazed from head to heels by the magic of the moonlight and the maddening music of the drums.

It was a picture that time can never dim. Black figures, leaping, crouching, whirling, inconceivably grotesque, silhouetted against the leaping flames. Black jungle, silent, mysterious, sinister, for a background. A gibbous moon swung low in a star-studded sky. The fetid closeness of the African night. The mighty river, a ribbon of purple shot with silver, winding away into the unknown. And always the deep-mouthed, hypnotic rumble of the drums in a wave of sound that rose and fell, rose and fell, as it rolled out across the vasts of Africa.



NIGHTFALL ON THE CONGO

Black and brooding forest, steaming jungle, sylvan bayous with palm-fringed shores, slim dug-outs with naked black men chanting at the paddles, mysterious little rivers which lead to God knows where



## CHAPTER VIII

### FRINGE OF THE FANTASTIC

WE were sitting on the veranda of a trading-post in a little bush village on the Luabala, a jungle-hemmed hamlet scavenged by vultures and dogs. Lunch was over, the terrific heat of the interminable African afternoon had set in, and even the chattering from the native huts had temporarily ceased. Of the men who sprawled in the canvas camp-chairs beside me one was a Belgian ivory-hunter, two were English traders, the fourth an officer of native constabulary. All of them had lived for years in Equatorial Africa, hard-bitten, unimaginative men who, in order to earn their livelihoods, endured discomfort, disease, danger, as a matter of course. All of them knew the Congo better than most people know their own counties. By *pirogue* and launch, in tepoy and afoot, they had covered between them the whole of that vast, mysterious region which

stretches from Lake Tchad to the Katanga, from the Gaboon to Mozambique.

We had been discussing the Congo native, his habits, customs, and beliefs. I had listened fascinated, for these were men who knew whereof they spoke. In response to some query I had made about the disposal of the dead, Heymann, the ivory-hunter, had been describing to us the strange practices of the Bateke, to the north of Stanley Pool, who bury a chief under the floor of his own hut. The mats in which the body is wrapped, he explained, are cut over the mouth and, in filling up the grave after interment, a length of bamboo is placed in a vertical position, one end in the mouth of the corpse, the other sticking out from the grave. When the earth has been filled in and trodden down the bamboo is withdrawn, leaving a small hole running from the surface to the mouth of the departed. And into this hole, from time to time, palm-wine is poured, so that the deceased may not lack in death the liquor which gladdened his heart when living.

“They are even more considerate of their dead right here on the Lualaba,” remarked one of the traders, an Englishman named Newton. “A really big chief always has a lot of slaves who

follow him around, paddle his canoes, and generally wait on him. When he dies it is not considered fitting that he should enter the spirit world unattended, as though he were only a slave himself. Women will be needed to cook and care for him, men to paddle his heavenly *pirogue*, so, when the time for burial comes, a retinue of attendants is thoughtfully provided for him."

"You don't mean to say," I exclaimed, incredulity in my tone, "that the authorities permit that sort of thing? I supposed that human sacrifice was as extinct in the Congo as *suttee* is in India."

I looked at the young police officer for confirmation.

"We do the best we can to stop it," he explained apologetically, "but this is an enormous country, remember—a third the size of your United States—with more than a thousand blacks for every white man. Such things are not always easy to control."

"That is the trouble with talking to strangers," the other trader, a Rhodesian, broke in brusquely. "They always seem to think that we are trying to spoof them—to pull their leg."

"I don't suppose you will believe me," he con-

tinued after a moment's pause, "when I tell you that I know of a paramount chief among the Nkundo people who never sits on a stool or on the ground—not in public, at least. When he wants to sit down one of his slaves stretches himself on the ground, face downward, and the chief sits on him. Another slave supports him from behind by leaning against him, back to back, and two others hold up his arms—a sort of human throne. I believe that his principal *bibi* [wife] is also allotted a slave to sit on on state occasions."

Heymann, the ivory-hunter, must have caught the flicker of incredulity that crossed my face.

"Down there," he said, pointing to where the great river lost itself in the black Congo forest, "not sixty kilometers from where we are sitting, is a place called Kasongo. You will pass it on your way to Kindu. The natives there hold to the belief that their paramount chief must never sleep on a mat like ordinary beings. So, in the old days—and the custom may still be followed, for all I know—he used a mattress made of women. Twelve of them were used, laid alternately, head and foot, and he slept on the lot."

"If I were to tell that story to my friends at



home," I said, "the charitable ones would say that the heat of the Congo had affected my brain, and the others that I was a champion liar."

"Yes, I know," said Newton wearily. "I've been through it myself. That is always the point of view of stay-at-homes. No one is more skeptical than the fellows who do their traveling in arm-chairs by the fireside. Merely because a thing is a bit out of the ordinary, because it is beyond their narrow horizons, they refuse to believe it. If one values a reputation for veracity he'd best keep quiet when he goes home about the things he sees and hears out here."

"Yet," he added, reflectively, "it is n't necessary to lie about the Congo. Some of the things that happen in the bush—yes, happen within sight of radio masts and police barracks and mission stations—are so incredibly fantastic that it would n't be possible to exaggerate them."

"So we're really sitting on the fringe of the fantastic," I suggested, laughing.

"Yes," he answered soberly. "You're damned well right. We are."

Just then, as though in confirmation of his words, a witch-doctor, clad in a straw kilt and a

monkey-skin cap, his body smeared white with clay and red with camwood, stalked past, followed by a woman, quite naked, pounding lustily on a drum.

From Kabalo onward we were in the absolute domain of the black man. The only Europeans that we encountered were an occasional priest and a still more occasional trader. The deeper we penetrated into the continent the more elaborate became the coiffures of the natives and the scantier their clothing. It was a noticeable fact, indeed, that the men were usually a shade more modestly attired than the women, who seemed to take pride in displaying as much as possible of their extremely voluptuous persons. I have frequently been asked if the sight of men and women in a state of complete nudity is not at first a little startling. It is neither shocking nor alluring. Perhaps it is their utter lack of self-consciousness, perhaps it is their black skins, but I think most African travelers will agree with me that a naked native is as impersonal as a bronze in a museum. Besides, mere nakedness, whether of black skins or white, has become a

commonplace to the present generation, as witness the ballets at the Folies Bergère or the Casino de Paris, or even at the New York Winter Garden.

It should be understood, of course, that the African is unmoral rather than immoral. Before marriage the women are as promiscuous in their sexual relations as the beasts of the field. But this, mind you, is not due to innate depravity; it is because they know no better. The natural consequence of this state of things is, of course, that venereal diseases are extremely common; in fact, almost universal. Yet marital infidelity is surprisingly rare, or was before the white man came, the usual punishment for unfaithfulness in the old days being death. But the Europeans, 95 per cent of whom keep black mistresses, have changed all that. Now all the woman gets is a beating.

I have been asked if any of the native women are beautiful, like the Polynesian damsels of which so much nonsense has been written. I do not recall ever having seen a beautiful native woman in Africa—beautiful according to European standards, that is—for it is impossible to

reconcile beauty with negroid features, a bulging abdomen, a body covered with cicatrizations, and a chocolate or soot-black skin. Occasionally, it is true, one sees young girls who are really comely, but these nearly always have a touch of Arab blood (or European, for that matter) as shown by their lighter colored skins.

I recall having seen at one river-town where we stopped to take on wood a slim, full-breasted maiden whose skin, in texture as smooth as a piece of satin, was in color a beautiful golden bronze. She appeared at first sight to have drawn over her head a tight-fitting cap made from a red rubber bath-sponge. Upon closer inspection, however, I discovered that she was wearing a wig cunningly woven from bark, to each separate strand of which she had affixed a pellet compounded from gum and camwood, so that from a little distance it looked as though her hair was a bright vermilion. This was, I ascertained, a custom peculiar to certain tribes, the women of which wear wigs of various colors—yellow, blue, bright green. The rest of her costume consisted of numerous strings of cowrie-shells—used as currency over most of Equatorial Africa—



*Photo by Dr. H. L. Shantz*

#### A BELLE OF BUKAMA

Considered a ravishing beauty in her own tribe, though it is rather difficult for Europeans to reconcile beauty with negroid features, a bulging abdomen, a body covered with cicatrizations, and a soot-black skin



festooned from her neck very much as American women of fashion wear ropes of pearls, while slung by a cord under her left breast, so that it clanged whenever she moved, was a large brass dinner-bell. This damsel of the vermilion hair was, it seemed, the daughter of a rich and powerful chief, her hand sought in marriage by young bucks for a hundred miles up and down the river. When I saw her she was engaged in a violent and, judging from her suggestive gestures, a somewhat improper flirtation with a sergeant of native constabulary who was moving with his company to a post down river.

Extremely curious marriage customs are practised among certain of the riverine peoples. For example, when the daughter of the paramount chief of the Nkundo tribe becomes engaged to be married, she is shut up for a period of two moons in an isolated hut at the edge of the village. During this period of purification she is not supposed to set foot to the ground. When inside the hut she rests her feet on a piece of furniture, but when she slips out in response to the demands of nature her attendants provide a sort of sidewalk for her by laying on the ground various

articles of value—knives, spear-heads, anklets, cooking-utensils, and the like—known as *mosolo*. On these she steps as cautiously as an aërial performer treads the slack wire and with as lively a fear of the consequences should she miss her footing. When the probationary period is over she is borne on a bed carried by warriors through the town in a sort of triumphal procession, swaying her lithe brown body back and forth to the frenzied beating of the tom-toms. Her affianced then pays the price agreed upon to her father, usually in the form of cowries, fish-nets, or roughly worked slabs of iron. This financial detail attended to, the wedding ceremony is complete, and he carries his bride off to his hut without further formality.

In England the eldest daughter of the king is called the Princess Royal; she is addressed as her Royal Highness, and on occasions of ceremony wears a diamond crown. In the Nkundo country the eldest daughter of the ruler is given the title of *Somisomi*, and instead of a crown she wears slung about her neck a human rib. An English monarch can confer on his daughter the title of Princess Royal merely by signing a decree,



but the king of the Nkundo, in order to raise *his* daughter to royal rank, has to go out and kill a man, usually a slave. From the body of his victim he cuts out the heart and a rib. The former the young woman eats; the latter she wears about her neck on a string. Thenceforward she is known as *Somisomi*, the crown princess, the first lady of the land.

Speaking of royal customs, here is another curious story related by a Belgian official who had been stationed in the new territories of Ruanda-Urundi, at the head of Lake Tanganyika. According to him, the king of Ruanda must never see his sons, which are taken to a distant village as soon as they are born. If by chance or design he should set eyes upon one of his male offspring, that luckless youngster is automatically disinherited and cannot succeed to the throne. Accordingly, the princes are intrusted to the care of a tutor, a man of rank, who is responsible with his life for their health and safety. Once a month he sends to the king a report of their physical progress—their height, weight, chest measurement, and general state of health. If one of his royal charges fails to develop properly, or falls

sick, or dies, the tutor is killed. This tends to make him careful. So, according to my informant, he reduces the percentage of risk as much as possible by keeping the princes on a diet of milk, and nothing but milk, until they reach the age of puberty. The Ruanda, who are a finely developed, highly war-like people, have numerous other peculiar customs. Thus, it is said that, in accordance with their belief in the survival of the fittest, they rid themselves of aged or infirm relatives, or of those who refuse to work or whom they are merely tired of seeing around, by pushing them over a precipice in the mountains, or did until the Belgians came.<sup>1</sup> In this they resemble a tribe I know of in Sumatra, where a person whose usefulness is ended is compelled to throw himself from a lemon-tree. Should he survive the fall he is promptly speared by his relatives and eaten, not because the tribe is cannibalistic but in order to give pious interment to the remains of the dear departed.

It must be borne in mind that few if any white men have actually witnessed the more bizarre and

<sup>1</sup> Further details of these extraordinary practices may be found in "Across Equatorial Africa," by Frederick Migeod.

bloodthirsty of these native customs. They are nearly always enveloped in the greatest mystery; the rites take place in remote spots in the bush; and the participants are bound to secrecy by their superstitious fears supplemented by terrible oaths. Such knowledge as Europeans have of their details is invariably gleaned from the Arabisés, who regard with a sort of contemptuous tolerance the antics of their less civilized brethren; from converts to Christianity, who sometimes confide tribal secrets to the missionaries in order to give convincing proof that they have wholly eschewed paganism; and from native house-servants, who, after a few months' employment in a white household, consider themselves immensely superior to the bushmen.

No one can travel for any length of time in Central Africa, however, without stumbling upon proofs of these fantastic practices and superstitions. Once, while walking along a narrow forest trail in the Kasongo country, I encountered two witch-doctors who were hastening by as though bound on an urgent errand. Both of them were calcimined from head to heels with white clay, and on this foundation had been traced elaborate

designs in red paint made from camwood, so that they bore a certain resemblance to the painted Indians of the old American frontier. One of them wore a kilted garment made from palm-fronds, so that he looked for all the world like a caricature of Gilda Gray. His colleague's costume was somewhat scantier, consisting only of a narrow breech-clout, a collar made from vines, and a smile. We stopped them, and for a small monetary consideration they permitted Barton to take their pictures. They did not tarry long, however, explaining through Amoni that they were pressed for time, having been commissioned by one tribe to lay a curse on an enemy tribe whose territory was some hours' march away. Despite their grotesque make-ups and the sinister nature of their errand, they were a genial, friendly pair and I should have liked to have had a longer visit with them. As they hastened down the trail after bidding us a friendly farewell they reminded me of a couple of nice old small-town physicians bound for a consultation and fearful of being late.

Tattooing, or cicatrization, to give it its proper name, plays an important part in the life of the

natives of Central Africa, the bodies of some of them being literally covered with these symbolic mounds and ridges, which the initiated can interpret as readily as a cow-puncher can read a cattle-brand, as a Scotsman can distinguish the tartans of the various clans, as a soldier can read another's military record by his medal-ribbons. By these marks can be determined a stranger's tribe and subtribe, his tribal rank—that is, whether he is a chief, subchief, medicine-man, or simple warrior—and the secret societies to which he belongs.

The process of cicatrization, which involves considerable loss of blood, is an extremely painful one. The design is first sketched on the skin with juice from a black berry, a small, razor-bladed knife being used to make the incisions. This phase of the operation the patient usually endures with stoicism, but it is another matter when the rubber latex used as an irritant is rubbed in, for when it touches the raw wound it burns like liquid flame. The whole operation is frequently completed at a single sitting, but the patient is sometimes helpless for weeks if the wounds suppurate and fever sets in. When healed

the body is covered with a network of wales—circles, ovals, horseshoes, crescents, vertical and horizontal lines—of which the owner is inordinately proud, these raised scars being considered as marks of beauty in the case of a woman.

Though the women are tattooed, I gathered, largely from motives of vanity, the custom has a much deeper significance among the men, a youth not being considered as having attained his manhood until he has passed through the terrible ordeal which precedes the ceremony of cicatrization. While wandering in the outskirts of a small village on the Upper Congo, curiosity led me to enter a small inclosure, fenced in by palm-fronds interlaced with bamboo, which stood in the edge of the bush. The place, which was deserted, at first glance resembled an ordinary native kraal, such as is to be found in every African village. But it had one feature which arrested my attention. Before the hut was a space so smooth and hard that I judged that it was used for dancing, this deduction being confirmed when I noted beneath the eaves of the hut two tall, cylindrical drums painted vermilion. Planted upright in the ground beside the drums were a





#### WITCH-DOCTORS OF THE KASONGO COUNTRY

One wore a costume of palm-fronds which made him look like a caricature of Gilda Gray. The other was content with a coat of kalsomine, a bark-cloth breech-clout, a collar of ferns, and a smile.



score or more of slender, flexible branches which had been trimmed and peeled to the size of buggy-whips. I could not hazard a guess as to their purpose, which I eventually learned from my friend, the White Father. According to him I had stumbled into a sort of lodge-room, the place where the secret rituals of the tribe were performed, and the whips I had seen were used for flogging the boys as a preliminary to the ceremony of cicatrization.

Later on I met an American mining engineer who, from a place of concealment in the bush, had actually witnessed this curious ritual. On the day fixed for the ordeal all the women go to another village, while the men repair to the kraal, where, under the direction of the chiefs and witch-doctors, they form up in two parallel ranks, leaving a lane between. Each man is armed with a whip, which has been steamed over a fire until it is as tough and supple as a strip of rawhide. When everything is in readiness the presiding chief gives a signal, and the witch-doctor, a grotesque figure in his paint and feathers, leads one of the youthful candidates from the kraal, where he has passed a period of seclusion and fasting.

The boy is as naked as the day he was born. His ordeal consists in running the gantlet, or, to be accurate, in walking it, for haste is considered a sign of fear. As he passes slowly between the lines of warriors each slashes viciously at him with his whip, the supple branch curling about the youth's body with a crack like a small-caliber rifle. In a few minutes his flesh is a bloody pulp, but he must neither cry nor flinch. If a scream of pain involuntarily escapes him he is sent back to the women in disgrace, the coveted privileges of manhood being denied him until he can endure the ordeal with the stoicism becoming an embryo warrior. Should he turn craven, however, he is either driven out of the tribe, to become a homeless wanderer in the bush, or he is killed by his own family and, in all likelihood, eaten. But if he displays sufficient courage to gain the approval of his elders, the tribal cicatrices are cut upon his breast and abdomen, and, after being circumcized by the witch-doctor, duly takes his place among the warriors of the clan. My American informant told me that the ceremony he witnessed lasted only about an hour, but an English traveler, Frederick Migeod, states that among the

tribes to the east of Stanley Falls the flagellation begins at sunrise and continues until sundown.

Cruel as this ordeal may seem to Europeans, it seldom results in permanent injury, and it is far surpassed in horror by the tortures to which some of the secret societies of the Congo subject candidates for admission. For sheer savagery it would be hard to surpass the initiation rites of the Lubuki. Before being accorded membership in this order the candidates are stripped naked and pegged out like human crosses upon the ground. Their bodies are then smeared with wild honey, and swarms of black ants are turned loose upon them. They are released only when it is seen that a continuance of the torture would result in death. Even should they die it would make no great difference. Human life is the cheapest thing there is in the Congo.

The African seems to take a peculiar delight in inflicting pain, and, like most inherently cruel peoples, he endures it with grim stoicism. Throughout the Congo disfigurement and mutilation are employed both for punishment and as a means of beautification. In the old Free State days the chiefs had the right to chop off the hand

or the foot of a wife who was unfaithful or disobedient, and similar penalties were frequently inflicted on men for various offenses. Hence the country abounds in natives minus a nose, an ear, a foot, or a hand, thus lending color to lurid tales of rubber atrocities, which, in many cases at least, if the truth were known, would be found to be the result of native practices and not of European cruelty.

In many of the Congo tribes, as, indeed, throughout Central and West Africa, one sees women who have been horribly disfigured by having pieces of wood, bone, or metal inserted in their lips or nostrils. The insertion of a silver five-franc piece in a woman's upper lip is a very common form of beautification, while I saw one woman whose upper lip had been distended to the width of one's hand by having inserted in the flesh a circular metal disk the size of an old-fashioned watch. Though nowadays the native women disfigure themselves from motives of vanity, wearing nose-sticks and lip-plates just as European women wear ear-rings, because it is the fashion, the custom owes its origin to precisely an opposite reason. In the days of the slave-trade,



#### CICATRIZATION

By these symbolic mounds and ridges, of which the owner is inordinately proud, can be determined his tribe, his rank, and the secret societies to which he belongs



when Arab slavers scoured the country in search of "black ivory" for sale to the planters of the Southern States and the West Indies, the observant natives noted that women whose faces were pitted by smallpox or otherwise noticeably disfigured were seldom taken. So, in order to escape being sold into slavery, with all the horrors that it implied, the women deliberately disfigured themselves. The slave-trade has long since ended, but for generations to come the mutilated faces of the women of the Congo will keep its sinister memory alive.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE HUMAN LEOPARDS

AS you journey west through the Congo you are told strange tales of sorcery and fetishism, of witch-doctors and medicine-men. And, keeping on, you hear of cicatrized savages with their teeth filed to points who practise cannibalism. But if you still hold your westward way along the mighty river as it winds about the equator like the serpent on a caduceus, you will come at last to towns where men speak below their breath of the Human Leopards, that sinister secret society which has cast a spell of terror over the whole of inner Africa.

The leopard society, which is referred to among most tribes as Aniato, is known in the Babali country, where it is particularly active, as Boto-bamu, or "Avengers of Men." Like the Thugs of India and the Assassins of Persia, the Human Leopards practise ritual murder as an avocation, the activities of the order being directed by the



witch-doctors, who make use of it for carrying out their criminal designs. It is unique, however, in that its members, when engaged on their murderous missions, wrap themselves in leopard-skins, the paws being fashioned into rude gloves fitted with iron claws, several inches long, with which the assassins tear out the throats of their victims. They usually run in packs of a dozen or more, and, when clad in their spotted pelts, slinking on all fours through the bush in the moonlight, are said to bear a startling resemblance to the treacherous animals from whom they take their name.

Though I questioned many persons—administrators, constabulary officers, traders, missionaries—about the organization and objects of the order, none of them was able to give me any definite information. I was astounded to find, however, how wide-spread is the practice of disguising as a leopard in order to commit murder, all of those with whom I discussed the question being agreed that the ramifications of the society cover virtually the whole of Central Africa, even extending as far as the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone.

Because of the secrecy habitually maintained by the African in regard to all matters connected with native life, and of the awe and terror in which the order is held by the black population, very little information concerning the Human Leopards is obtainable from native sources. It would appear, however, that the society is more or less religious in character, the murders committed by its members being for the purpose of obtaining human blood and fat with which to make "big medicine" and to propitiate their unclean gods. In spite of the fact that cannibalism is practised by most of the tribes among which the society is active, there is reason to believe that the Human Leopards do not kill merely in order to satisfy a craving for human flesh, as some of them, at least, eat only the heart of the victim.

The tales told of the Human Leopards are enough to make the blood run cold, to keep a man awake o' nights. Notwithstanding the relentless warfare waged against the order by the Belgian authorities, scarcely a week goes by that reports do not come into the settlements of some chief or witch-doctor who has been found dead at the

edge of his village, his body ripped and torn by savage claw-marks and with footprints, half animal, half human, all around. An American mining engineer whom I met on the Congo told me that on one occasion, while on *safari* in the Big Bend region, the native sentries guarding his camp were attacked by Human Leopards in the night. One man, though terribly mauled by the iron claws of his skin-clad assailants, lived to tell the tale. His companion was found at the edge of the bush in a pool of blood, his body covered with wounds and his heart torn out.

When a candidate for admission into the Anieto presents himself for initiation he must give proof that he has killed a man of his own tribe. If he is found to have fulfilled this qualification he is accepted as a novice, his novitiate consisting of living alone in the forest for eight weeks on food that he kills or finds for himself. Having thus afforded proof of his hardihood, resourcefulness, and courage, he is summoned to appear before a full meeting of the chapter when, after being bound to secrecy by appalling oaths, he is cicatrized with the sign-manual of the order. This cabalistic mark is made by piercing the flesh

with an iron needle, raising it, shaving off a thin slice of skin, and treating the wound with the wild ground nut. This painful process, several times repeated, produces a series of little raised dots or ridges, though it must not be assumed that cicatrices necessarily imply membership in the Human Leopard Society, for they are used throughout Central Africa both for purposes of decoration and as tribal marks. In the Babali country a Human Leopard is tattooed on the chest above the tribal cicatrizations, but in West Africa he is usually marked on the buttocks, so that the sinister symbol will be concealed by the loin-cloth, which is his only article of clothing. As the identity of an Aniota is known only to his fellow lodge-members, one is always on the lookout for this telltale brand when meeting a native in the forest. If he is seen to bear the Mark of the Beast he is thereafter sedulously avoided, particularly at night and in lonely places, very much as the citizens of civilized communities would avoid a notorious gunman. But little he cares, for he is now a licensed murderer, a Human Leopard in good standing.

It is not possible to say with any certainty just

what part cannibalism plays in the rites of the Human Leopards. One significant fact has been brought out, however, in all the investigations: the leading spirits in the society are not young and lusty warriors but natives of mature age, men well past their prime. These are the grand masters, the ones who manage the concern, so to speak, and to them are assigned the most coveted portions of the bodies. One is led to the conclusion, therefore, that though the Human Leopards eat the hearts and livers, and probably in many cases the bodies of their victims, it is not done to satisfy any cannibalistic cravings, nor in connection with any religious rite, but in the convictions that it will increase their virility. From time beyond reckoning, in fact, savage peoples have believed that by eating the vital organs of an enemy they will inherit his strength and prowess. And, when you stop to think about it, it is not such a far cry from this superstitious belief of the Congo savage to Voronoff's theory that rejuvenation may be effected by transplanting human glands.

In all likelihood, therefore, cannibalism *per se* is only a by-product of this form of fetishism.

It may have been practised originally only in order to insure secrecy, the members of a lodge binding themselves together by each partaking of the flesh of their victims, thus making themselves, in the eyes of the law, equally guilty of the crime. The belief gradually arose, however, that human flesh was endowed with certain tonic qualities, so that as time passed a higher value came to be placed on the flesh than on the vital organs. Cannibalism is certainly not practised by all the branches of the society, however, for numerous cases have been reported of murders committed by Human Leopards where the body of the victim was found with only the vital organs missing.

The activities of the Human Leopards are controlled and directed by the witch-doctors, those fantastic medico-politico-ecclesiastical figures who are found in every community in Central Africa. The witch-doctors, who are frequently chiefs, sorcerers, physicians, and high priests in one, exercise enormous power in their respective tribes and villages, and, it might be added, are generally bitterly jealous of each other. They are as skilled as the Borgias in concocting and ad-





WARRIORS OF A CANNIBAL TRIBE OF THE EASTERN CONGO

Though cannibalism has been pretty well wiped out along the main river it is still common in the back-blocks of the colony



ministering secret poisons; compared to them Machiavelli was a bungling amateur in political chicanery and corruption; by playing on the ignorance, superstition, fears, and credulity of the natives they usually amass great wealth; they frequently have it in their power to dethrone a chief, to wreck a dynasty, or to precipitate a war; and, being utterly unscrupulous, the Human Leopard Society provides them with a potent weapon with which to gain their nefarious ends.

The practice of the profession is usually confined to certain families, which claim to be able to trace their lineage back for many generations, the secrets of the trade being handed down from father to son. Only one member of the family practises at a time, however, though he may be assisted by his relatives. All the witch-doctors have a rude knowledge of surgery and are skilled in the use of herbs, though, in order to impress their people, they profess to effect their cures by the aid of witchcraft. It is often asserted, and as frequently denied, that they have certain highly efficacious herbal remedies of which the medical profession knows nothing. Be this as it may, any white man who has lived for any length

of time in Africa will tell you of remarkable cures which the witch-doctors have effected, even in the cases of Europeans.

If a native falls ill it is said that his body has become the abode of a devil, whereupon the local witch-doctor is summoned to drive the devil out. Sometimes the devil is caught and put into a bottle. It is then for the patient to say whether it shall be destroyed, which can only be done by fire and necromancy, or whether it shall be released and propitiated by various offerings and thus turned into a friendly devil which he can make use of to injure some other person. Every African household has a number of these tame devils which are employed for purposes of spite and revenge. It might be mentioned, parenthetically, that in Africa the good spirits are always black, the white spirits being the evil ones. For his services the witch-doctor, who always has an eye on the main chance, charges all that the traffic will bear, so that he generally amasses a considerable fortune. Witch-doctors are frequently employed by the tribe or village to lay a curse on a rival community; they are used to discover the place of concealment of stolen

property (in which, it might be mentioned, they sometimes meet with extraordinary success); and they are sometimes engaged by the chiefs to ascertain whether their numerous wives have been unfaithful to them. The witch-doctors also often combine the functions of a high priest with the practice of necromancy, being the keepers of the tribal gods and voodooos, whose commands are issued through them. Always a pernicious influence, their association with the Human Leopards has vastly increased their power for evil.

The first definite reference to Human Leopards is to be found in Banbury's "Sierra Leone, or the White Man's Grave," published in 1888. The author says: "Secret cannibalism is also prevalent, though the native punishment for this custom is death, and in the Mendi Mission (an American society) they possess the skin of a large leopard, with iron claws, which had once been the property of a man who, under this guise, satisfied his horrible craving."

T. J. Aldridge, who has had a long and intimate acquaintance with the tribes of the West Coast hinterland, is of the opinion that the Human

Leopard Society is of no great age, probably not more than three quarters of a century. All that can be said with any certainty, however, is that until very recently the operations of the order were either so limited, or enveloped in such secrecy, that it was unknown to Europeans. There seems to be no doubt, however, that it has expanded and increased its activity during recent years.

In West Africa this extraordinary class of crime attained such alarming proportions that the Government of Sierra Leone passed an ordinance which made it a penal offense for any person to have in his possession a leopard-skin fashioned so as to make a man wearing it resemble a leopard, a trident-like knife commonly known as a "leopard-knife," or a medicine referred to among the natives as *borfima*.

During an investigation by a special commission it was shown that there existed another secret order known as the Human Alligator Society. This appears to have been an offshoot of the Human Leopards, the usual meeting-place of its members being in the vicinity of rivers where crocodiles—or alligators, as they are called lo-

cally—abound. Thereupon the law was further amended, and it was made a felony for any person to have in his possession an alligator shaped so as to make a person wearing it resemble the animal of that name.

Three other articles were later made unlawful: a dress of monkey-skins used by an order known as the Human Baboon Society, which had been discovered to exist in one of the northern districts of the colony; a peculiar type of whistle, known as a *kukoi*, used for calling the members of an unlawful society together; and an iron needle employed for cicatrizing the members of these secret orders.

During the hearings of the commission reference was constantly made by native witnesses to a mysterious medicine (the term is used in its African sense, meaning philter or charm) known as *borfima*, which is a contraction of *boreh fima*, "medicine-bag." This "medicine," which is usually contained in a leather package or pouch, contains, among other things, the white of an egg, a few grains of rice, the blood of a cock, and the blood, fat, and portions of the vital organs of a human being. Each chapter of the Human Leop-

ards has its own *borfima*, which is an all-powerful instrument in the hands of those who control it. It will make them rich and powerful; it will bring them high tribal honors and give them victory in battle; it will help them in cases in the white man's courts; and it has the effect of installing in the native mind profound awe of its owners. But, like the battery of a motor-car, the *borfima* will run down, become debilitated, unless periodically revitalized. This is effected by anointing it with blood and fat taken from a freshly slaughtered human being, and to obtain this human blood and fat appears to be the primary object of the Human Leopard Society.

Meetings of the society are held only when its leaders consider that the *borfima* belonging to their particular lodge requires "bleeding" or "feeding." If the crops or the fishing have been bad, if the tribe has met with disaster in battle, if there has been an unusual amount of sickness, in short, if anything has gone wrong seriously, that is sufficient proof that the *borfima* is hungry and demands attention. Accordingly, word is passed around that the members of the lodge will gather at some lonely spot in the forest for the

transaction of important business, which consists in the appointment of what might be described as an executive committee. These meetings are characterized by all the ceremonial and shibboleth so dear to the African heart, the members making themselves known to each other by passwords, secret grips, or a peculiar rolling of the eyes. Apparently one of the rules requires that the victim must be provided by a member, usually one who has received some material advancement, such as a sub or paramount chief, much as the various members of a small-town bridge-club take turns in providing the refreshments. When it has been decided who is to provide the victim, the date and place of the murder are determined upon and the executive committee is chosen.

On the night of the party—usually a night with a full moon—the members of the chapter assemble at an appointed rendezvous in the bush. The costume worn when engaged on these diabolical missions consists either of a leopard-skin fitted with iron claws, such as I have previously described, or a robe of bark-cloth painted to resemble one. This garment is tied around the loins and drawn over the head like a monk's cowl, with

two holes cut in it for the eyes, the outfit being completed by a leopard's tail attached to the belt and hanging down behind. Those designated to do the killing carry very sharp, short-handled, three-pronged knives and bottle-shaped sticks with the large end carved into a rude imitation of a leopard's pad. With these they stamp counterfeit tracks on the ground about the body of their victim.

On some pretext or other the unfortunate selected for sacrifice is lured to the spot in the bush where the murderers are waiting. As, all unsuspecting, he passes with his Judas, the killers steal up on silent feet and drive their tridents deep into his neck, severing the vertebra, death being in most cases practically instantaneous. If, as sometimes happens, it is found impossible to lure the victim into the bush, he is murdered in the village, perhaps in his own hut, and the body is conveyed to the place of assembly where the *borfima* is duly "blooded." In some crimes the vital organs are torn out, and the body, mauled by the iron claws almost beyond recognition, is left upon the ground. But in those tribes where cannibalism, ritualistic or otherwise, pre-





AN AFRICAN FILLING-STATION

There are no cows in the Congo—but they are not really needed



vails, it is cut up and divided among the Leopards, the flesh either being eaten raw upon the spot or taken home and cooked. As one of the witnesses who appeared before the Sierra Leone commission naïvely put it, "Some like it raw, some roast, some boiled with rice."

The Belgian and British governments have, of course, adopted the most vigorous methods to stamp out the order, but its operations are so extensive that no sooner are they suppressed in one place than they break out in another. Moreover, so great is the terror which the society inspires among the natives that it is almost impossible to obtain witnesses who will give testimony against it; even the parents of children who have fallen victims cannot be induced to assist the authorities in bringing the criminals to justice.

The reign of terror instituted by the Human Leopards in the Big Bend of the Congo assumed such threatening proportions a few years ago that the authorities determined to put an end to its activities for good and all in that particular region. Accordingly a general round-up of all suspects was ordered, and, after a trial lasting several weeks, fourteen of them were found guilty

and sentenced to be hanged. The executions took place in Basoko, thousands of natives being summoned to view the hanging as an object-lesson. But the effect on which the authorities had counted was very nearly ruined by one of the condemned, an *Aniota ishumu*, or high priest, who, being granted permission to say a few words before being launched into eternity, glorified the purposes of the order and called upon his fellow Leopards to carry on the good work, or words to that effect, as their fathers had done before them.<sup>1</sup>

In studying the sociological questions presented by these secret murder societies, their cause and cure, the sinister environment of the people must be taken into consideration. I have been in many forests, but in none which is so weird and somber as the black forest of the Congo. There is something about the Congo bush that gives one a curiously oppressive feeling of lurking

<sup>1</sup> Literature relating to the Human Leopards is extremely scarce. The sketch of the activities of the order as given here is the result of numerous conversations with government officials, traders, and missionaries, supplemented by the more or less fragmentary accounts to be found in Banbury's "Sierra Leone, or the White Man's Grave"; "Human Leopards," by K. J. Beatty; "Across Equatorial Africa," by Frederick Migeod; and the reports of the British West African Commission.

danger, of secret evil. You know that behind that curtain of jungle, perhaps not a mile away, abominable rites are being performed, nameless horrors are happening, the very thought of which makes the flesh creep and the blood run cold. It may be the appalling solitude, or the mystery of the great, dark, swift-flowing river, or the ominous boom of distant drums, or the knowledge that one is being watched by unseen eyes; it may be the associations of the slave-trade, or the rubber atrocities, or cannibalism, but I rather think that the indefinable sense of horror and impending peril felt by most Europeans is attributable to the black, brooding forest itself and the uncanny sounds which issue from it—whispers, rustlings, maniacal cries. More than once when alone in the forest, particularly toward nightfall, I experienced that prickling of the spine, that uncontrollable sense of panic which overtakes children—and sometimes grown persons too, for that matter—when entering a deserted house or a dark room. We know that this atmosphere of cruelty and dread and gloom frequently affects white men living in the bush, leading them to indulge in prac-

tices, to commit excesses, which in more wholesome surroundings would horrify them. I am convinced, therefore, that some of the spirit of their environment has likewise entered into the natives themselves and accounts for their dark and bloody customs.

Now it should be remembered that the Central African negro is by no means so low in the mental scale as he has been painted. In many matters he is extremely shrewd, with a keen sense of humor and an active mind. Experience has shown that even the most primitive and barbarous of the African peoples respond with surprising alacrity to the influences of civilization. But at present they are appallingly ignorant and sunk in superstition—a condition which is deliberately encouraged by the witch-doctors in order to maintain their influence and further their nefarious designs. For, were the belief in witchcraft and fetishes to disappear, the occupation of the native priesthood would be gone. It would seem, then, that the first step in the process of amelioration should be the complete elimination of the witch-doctors, who are an unmitigated influence for evil in the land. The second step should be to devise

some wholesome substitute for their murderous rites and cruel customs, which are products of ignorance and superstition. And the only substitute for ignorance and superstition is education.

## CHAPTER X

### WHITE HELMETS AND BLACK SKINS

**T**HE running of a tropical colony, as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once remarked, is, of all tests, the most searching to which the nation that attempts it can be subjected. To hold great power and not to abuse it; to see great wealth and not to seize it; to rule helpless natives without oppressing them; to meet difficulties, discouragements, and dangers without yielding to them; to dwell among degraded peoples without degenerating; to keep a cool head under a hot sun—these are the acid tests of a nation's character.

Judged by her administration of the Congo, Belgium has stood these tests reasonably well, particularly when one recalls the handicaps under which she has labored. When, in 1908, Belgium took over the administration of the Congo Free State, it was generally felt, to use an inelegant expression, that she had bitten off more than she could chew. The Belgians, with no previous colo-



nial experience whatsoever, with comparatively limited financial resources, at least when compared with those of the great colonial powers, and with no army worthy of the name, suddenly found themselves confronted with the task of running a vast equatorial colony, nearly ninety times the size of the mother-country and six thousand miles away, having a treacherous climate and a savage, highly warlike population. At home and abroad, moreover, the Congo had a most sinister reputation as a result of the exposures of the excesses and cruelties committed under King Leopold's régime.

By reason of its remoteness and the notorious laxity of its administration, which disregarded extradition warrants more frequently than it honored them, the Congo Free State had long been a haven for the unscrupulous as well as the adventurous, for the desperate as well as the daring, for the criminal as well as the ne'er-do-well. Slave-traders, gun-runners, ivory-poachers, gamblers, deserters, fugitives from justice, men who had left their countries suddenly, between two days, and for their countries' good, had all found in it a refuge and a happy hunting-ground. From

such as these, most of them not Belgian at all, the officials of the Free State had largely been recruited. I do not mean to imply, mind you, that all of the Europeans who went out to the Congo in those hectic days were rascals, or that even a majority of them were, but there can be no denying that a very large proportion would have been regarded in a civilized community as undesirable citizens. Though many of those holding office under the Free State administration were summarily dismissed when the new régime came in, a good few were retained, some because they had shown real ability, the rest because it was impossible to find substitutes possessed of the necessary experience. From the very outset, therefore, Belgium was handicapped in her efforts to give the new colony a decent government by the unfitness of many of the old officials and the inexperience of the new ones.

Because of the scores of reputations that had been blasted by the rubber scandals; because, thanks to its cannibals and its supposedly deadly climate, the country had come to be known as the "white man's graveyard," the Congo had acquired so sinister a name that when the Govern-





*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

WHITE HELMETS AND BLACK SKINS

A native administrator holding a palaver with paramount chiefs in the Katanga

ment at Brussels undertook the task of reorganization, the upper classes in Belgium, corresponding to those from which the British colonial service is recruited, would have nothing to do with it. The aristocracy preferred the pleasant and not arduous careers offered by the army and the diplomatic service to life in Central Africa, with its discomforts, its diseases, and its dangers. In fact, after the lapse of nearly two decades, the Congo has not yet entirely shaken off its unsavory reputation; I have even heard it asserted that Belgians who are called there by business scrape the telltale labels from their luggage before landing at Antwerp—a statement which is, no doubt, a gross exaggeration.

Thus it came about that the Government, in its quest for officials for the new dependency, was compelled to turn to the middle class, the bourgeoisie. Substantial, honest, well-meaning men, you understand, but without training, experience, traditions. And that is the class that holds the reins of civil authority in the Congo to-day. The same holds true of the military side of the administration. Life in the guides and the lancers, the grenadiers and the chasseurs, at pleasant

Belgian garrison towns, so the officers argued, held far more attractions than a sun-blasted, fever-stricken existence at some lonely jungle outpost under the shadow of the line. So the military and semi-military posts in the colony were filled either by foreigners or by men who had held low rank in the army at home. Those officers and men who volunteered for service in the Congo were given an increase of three grades: corporals became second lieutenants, sergeants became first lieutenants; sergeant-majors became captains; lieutenants became commandants. This is why the traveler in the Congo, particularly if he has come from British or French colonies, is often struck by the lack of poise and polish among the bulk of the officers and officials, especially in the lower grades; the absence of that intangible something which, for want of a better word, can only be described as background. Though the employment of foreigners in the Congo has undoubtedly tended to weaken the *esprit de corps*, many of the foreigners, notably the Scandinavians and Italians, have filled the highest posts in the administration with conspicuous success. With very few exceptions, however, the only foreigners now

in the service are older men who have held their posts since the Free State days.

But there is another and more serious aspect to the personnel question. The colony is so vast and its staff so wretchedly inadequate that it is not uncommon for a youth to find himself in charge of a district as large as Belgium itself before he has had time to learn the language or acquaint himself with the customs and peculiarities of the inhabitants. In the hands of officials who held commissions in the army at home the natives are safe enough, but the same cannot always be said of the *sous-officiers*, who are seldom of higher rank than corporal in the Belgian military establishment and who are not accustomed to the proper exercise of authority. To invest men who have had no training in colonial administration and no tropical experience, many of them mere youngsters, with autocratic authority over native peoples must inevitably result in inefficiency if not in actual abuses.

If the stories which one constantly hears in the Congo of venality and corruption among the lower officials are true—and I was repeatedly assured by traders that in many districts it is impossible

to get anything accomplished without greasing the palms of the local administrators—this condition is largely due, no doubt, to the fact that the officials are miserably underpaid. Moreover, the fall in the franc, taken in connection with the corresponding rise in the cost of living, has had the effect of reducing the salaries of officials, so far as purchasing-power is concerned, to a mere fraction of what they formerly received. For example, a *commissaire de district* receives, let us say, a salary of twenty thousand francs. Before the war this was equivalent, roughly, to four thousand dollars; to-day it is equal to less than a thousand. And the Congo, remember, is by no means an inexpensive country for the European, the cost of living in the colony having increased since the war by several hundred per cent. As the manager of an English trading-company remarked to me, “With prices as they are, the poor devils would starve to death if they didn’t do a little grafting on the side.”

But an equally valid excuse cannot be advanced for the moral laxity which prevails among the officials of the colony, fully 90 per cent of whom, I have heard it stated on trustworthy authority,





*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

**BLACK ROYALTY**

A paramount chief and his entourage at Stanleyville. He is readily distinguishable by the silver plate set in his upper lip and his white spats



maintain liaisons with native women. The astonishing thing about these unions, however, is not so much that they exist—for that sort of thing is practised to some extent in every tropical colony that I have visited—as the fact that they are accepted as a matter of course, not only by the Europeans living in the Congo, but by the Government at home.

The right or wrong of this question I have no intention of discussing here, but certainly there is no excuse for the conspicuous positions which these women occupy or for the fashion in which the officials flaunt their illicit relationships before the public gaze. An American engaged in business in the Congo told me that it was a common occurrence to see the commissioner of his district seated in an arm-chair on the veranda of the residency, in full view of passers-by, a scantily clad black girl on one knee and a bottle of gin on the other. The governor of a certain important province may frequently be seen, in the cool of the late afternoon, teaching his chocolate-colored mistress—who, by the way, is commonly referred to as “Madame la Gouvernatrice”—to ride a bicycle on the main street of the provincial capital.

Among my fellow-passengers on the boat returning from the Congo were two *commissaires de district*, one of them a baron, who had with them their mulatto children, whom they were taking home to be educated. And, what is still more astonishing, I was told that when the wives of officials come out from Europe to join their husbands, they not only accept with complacency these mixed unions but frequently bring up the black and tan children resulting from them as their own. The only official cognizance taken of this condition, so far as I could learn, was in the form of an order issued by the governor-general not long ago, forbidding officials to take their black mistresses with them in tepoys, as many of them had been accustomed to do, when on tours of inspection.

I have heard it asserted on more than one occasion that the authorities, far from condemning these relationships, tacitly encourage new officials to use "sleeping dictionaries" on the ground that the men quickly pick up a knowledge of the native language from their *bibis*, that from their gossip the official often obtains valuable hints on native affairs and sentiment, and that female

companionship tends to keep officials more contented with their lonely lot. Such arguments are distinctly specious, however, being strongly reminiscent of the German method of reasoning.

Even though the Belgian Government sees fit to disregard the moral aspect of such liaisons, it is certainly curious that it should ignore the demoralizing effect which they have on the native population. For it is an axiom in dealing with any colored race, and particularly with the races of Central Africa, that the governors must have the respect of the governed. And, once the white man loses the respect of the native, it is impossible to enforce obedience to authority and discipline. It is scarcely surprising, then, that when natives observe the wanton relations existing between the women of their own race and their European masters, they should treat the latter with a familiarity bordering on contempt. To such lengths is this familiarity carried that natives will frequently interrupt and join in a conversation between Europeans. It is likewise a common thing to see buxom black women, clad in flamboyant cottons, sauntering about a post, laughing, shrieking, and bantering with the

Europeans whose homes they pass; and, very likely, the Europeans will come out and joke with them. Such a condition would not be tolerated for an instant in an American or British colony, and the sooner it is brought to an end in the Congo the better it will be for the country, the Government, and the people.

And, still leaving morality aside, there are other aspects to the question. For example, sexual intimacies between whites and blacks enormously increase venereal diseases among the Europeans, thereby seriously affecting the efficiency of the officials, many of whom are sent back to Belgium after a few years in the Congo with their health irretrievably ruined. Again, the natural loquacity of the negro makes it extremely difficult to maintain secrecy regarding important governmental matters, for the black *bibis* are constantly overhearing confidential conversations and lose no time in retailing the news thus obtained to their native friends. But the greatest harm involved in these unions, as I have already remarked, is loss of prestige, for it is obvious that an official who is known to have a black mistress cannot hope to receive from the natives the re-

spect which his position as the representative of the Government demands.

No one who visits the Congo fresh from a British or French colony can fail to be struck by the contrast in the demeanor of the natives; the lack of discipline I shall call it for want of a better term. Not only does the Congo black stand in no awe of the white man, particularly the Belgian, but his attitude is all too frequently marked by sullenness, impertinence, often open disrespect. Never once during my stay in the Congo, save only in the vicinity of mission stations, did I see a native salute a white man with that gesture of respect and friendliness which is almost universal in British and French colonies in Equatorial Africa. This is due in some measure, no doubt, to the attitude of the Belgians themselves, who neither require nor, apparently, expect such salutations, but still more to the large number of Portuguese in the colony, who, by their mode of life, have long since forfeited the respect of the native.

Their contempt for the white man who lives like a black is pithily expressed by the natives of the Middle Congo, who divide mankind into four categories: the *Bantu*, which, literally translated,

means "We the people"; the *Mandeli*, or "wearers of cloth," the generic name applied to all Europeans; the *Bantu Fioti*, "the little men," i.e., the pygmies; and the *Bysenji M'Pembi*, as the Portuguese are called, which means "white bushmen."

*Bula Matadi*, or Rock Breaker, the name given to Stanley when he dynamited the rocks in the river in order to permit the passage of his canoes, is the term universally applied by the natives of all tribes to the Government of the Congo and to government officials, though in the case of the latter it is qualified by the suffix *monéné* (big) according to the rank of the individual referred to. Thus, a *commissaire-général* is called *Bula Matadi monéné*; a vice-governor is *Bula Matadi monéne monéne*; while the governor-general himself bears the sonorous appellation of *Bula Matadi monéne monéne monéné*, pronounced with a rising inflection.

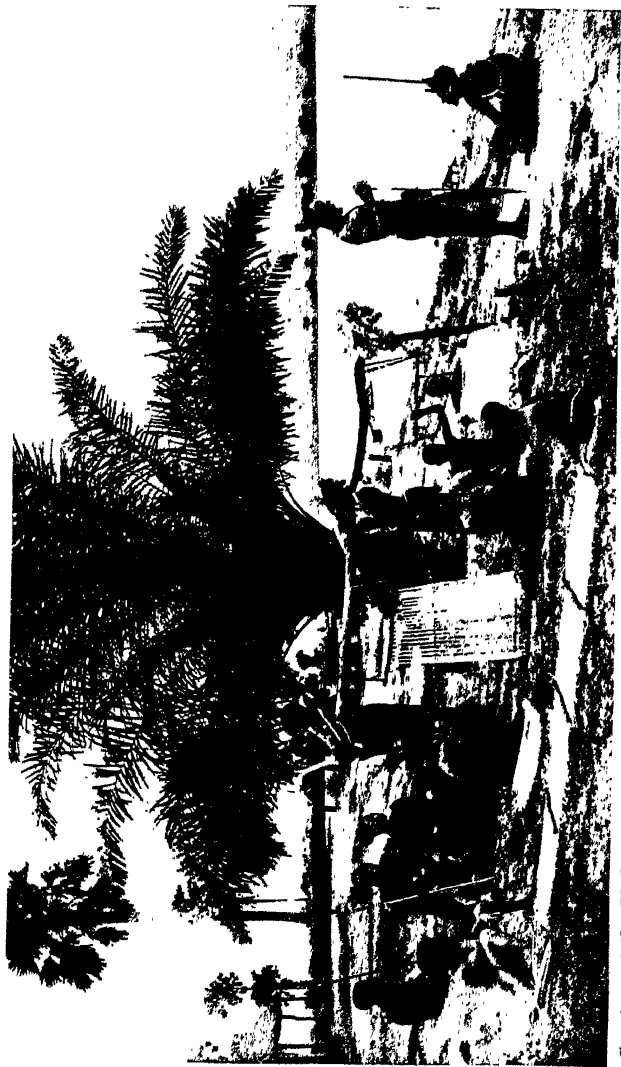
When the Belgian Government assumed responsibility for the Congo, there was an abrupt and complete reversal of the former attitude toward the natives, this being largely due, no doubt, to the revulsion of public opinion caused



by the rubber revelations. But the question is now being asked whether the Government has not gone too far in the opposite direction. The business men with whom I talked were almost unanimous in stating that the Government is now much too lenient with the natives and over-severe with Europeans. I met several Belgians who spoke with approval of the disciplinary methods employed by the British in Kenya Colony and Tanganyika Territory, where, under certain conditions, Europeans are permitted to flog their native employees. In the Congo, on the other hand, for a white man so much as to slap a native renders him liable to a fine if not to imprisonment. The proper course is to go to the nearest police post and lodge a complaint against the man for being insolent, but this is done only as a last resort, for the Europeans appear to be firmly convinced that in such cases the black man usually stands a better chance in court than the white man. Captains on the river-boats are permitted to punish disobedience among their crews with up to twelve lashes, but a measure was recently introduced in the Belgian Parliament to abolish all flogging in the Congo, even in the prisons.

Generally speaking, I am opposed to flogging, not because it hurts the self-respect or seriously harms the body of the native, for it does neither, but because of the danger of permitting such punishment to be inflicted by men lacking in judgment and self-control. When I was in Kenya, on my way out to the Congo, that colony was ringing with the case of a young English planter, the son of a bishop, who had flogged one of his native servants to death because the boy had mistreated a horse. The accused was exonerated by a jury of fellow-planters, a verdict which brought down on the local authorities the severe censure of the Colonial Office; but the case vividly illustrates the danger of intrusting such powers to irresponsible individuals. Still, among a savage people who recognize punishment only when it entails pain, there is something to be said for flogging as a means of correction. The Hausa of the West Coast very neatly sums up the point of view of the African himself in his saying that "the body hears better than the ear."

Though a traveler like myself is hardly justified in criticizing the administration of a country of which, after all, he sees comparatively little, I



*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

#### THE WEAVERS

At some of the riverine villages the women were weaving on crude looms the strips of bark-cloth which form their only garments



came to the opinion, based on what I learned from many sources, that the Congo is suffering from over-centralization of the powers of government. There appeared to be a surfeit of laws and regulations; too little was left to the judgment and initiative of the man on the spot. The officials are perplexed and harassed by a multitude of laws, regulations, rules, decrees, and orders in council, many of which, because of local conditions, they are utterly unable to carry out—a system which weakens the authority of the officials by losing them the respect of the natives. What the native wants, after all, is not law but justice.

From the missionaries, who unquestionably have the best interests of the native at heart, I heard numerous criticisms of the system of taxation. From what they said I gathered that if the taxes were spread uniformly over the whole population they would not be unduly onerous, but that, as in most cases they are borne by the few rather than the many, they are productive of real hardship and considerable discontent.

In order to minimize the danger of a native uprising—a contingency always at the back of the

Government's mind in such a country as the Congo, where the natives outnumber the whites by more than a thousand to one—the Belgians have for some years pursued the policy of systematically discrediting the various chiefs, of undermining their authority, or, when this has been found impracticable, of setting one against the other, on the theory, presumably, that in disunion lies weakness. This is, of course, diametrically opposed to the policy which has been pursued with marked success in British Africa, where the Government not only recognizes and supports the various chiefs but even delegates to them a considerable measure of authority. The paramount chiefs in Uganda, for example, are permitted to inflict sentences of up to six months' hard labor, though such sentences are subject to revision by the district commissioner. The British method has the advantage of providing each tribe with a recognized head with whom the authorities can deal and whom, in the event of trouble, they can hold responsible. But this is impossible under the Belgian system, for so many of the Congo chiefs have been dethroned or exiled that it has become almost impossible for a

white man to discover the identity of the real head of the tribe, a puppet usually being pushed forward if any business has to be transacted, while the actual chief remains discreetly in the background.

In this connection Frederick Migeod relates an instructive story. Some years ago there was a palaver with one of the Kasai tribes—"palaver," I might mention, parenthetically, means in theory a discussion, a parley, but in practice it usually implies a disturbance—and the Belgian authorities demanded that the chief of the offending tribe be surrendered for punishment. Now, it so happened that none of the officials had ever set eyes on the chief, which is by no means uncommon in the remoter districts, so, when the tribe sent in a slave by way of substitute it was assumed that he was the chief, and, upon conviction, he was sent to Boma for ten years' penal servitude, which he spent in a chain-gang employed on railway construction. His sentence finished, he was taken back to his village, and the commissioner said, "Here is your chief back again." Whereupon the people replied: "That man was only a slave. Our chief has been here

all along." But they found that it did not pay to play tricks on the white man's government, for the slave was made a chief and later a paramount chief, the tribe being compelled to accept him, for the Government refused to recognize any other.

It is a remarkable thing, when you consider it, that, though there are upward of ten million blacks in the Congo, and less than five thousand Belgians, there has never been a native uprising in the colony, or, so far as I am aware, even a serious attempt at one. This freedom from trouble has been due in some measure, no doubt, to the policy of weakening the power of the chiefs, and 'still more to the system of stationing troops in localities other than those from which they come, Bangala soldiers being sent to the Baluba country, Balubas to the Bas-Congo, and so on. But the real reason, I imagine, lies in the fact that the natives have no common language, a Swahili-speaking native from the eastern provinces, or a man from the Big Bend region, where Lingala is the prevailing tongue, being quite unable to converse with the people around Stanley Pool, who speak a tongue known as Kikongo, or with the



tribes of the Kasai, where Baluba is spoken. This lack of a common tongue makes anything in the nature of a concerted uprising out of the question. Nevertheless, it speaks volumes for the firmness, tact, and common sense of the Belgian officials that so huge a territory, with an immense and warlike population, and with no European troops whatsoever to depend on—for the Congo garrisons are entirely composed of native soldiers—should have completely escaped wars, outbreaks, and serious disorders. I know of no other colony in Africa of which as much can be said.

## CHAPTER XI

### SPEAKING OF CANNIBALS

WHEN I went out to the Congo I supposed that the cannibalism that is associated in the minds of most people with Central Africa was a thing of the past, that it had been as effectually eradicated by the Belgians as the British have stamped out the practice, so long prevalent in India, of burning widows on the funeral pyres of their dead husbands. The government officials with whom I talked pooh-poohed the suggestion that human flesh was still eaten in the colony, and so did the missionaries, or, at any rate, the majority of them.

Doubts as to the accuracy of these assertions began to assail me, however, before I had been in the Congo very long. Even before we left the Indian Ocean seaboard, indeed, there came to my ears stories that led me to wonder if I had not been misinformed. For example, the British chief of police at Dar-es-Salaam, in Tanganyika Terri-

tory, positively asserted that during the Anglo-German operations in the former German East Africa a number of porters attached to the British expeditionary force, as well as the wives of some of the British *askari*, had been killed and eaten by native troops from the Congo, an assertion which was in some measure corroborated by British commissioners and political officers with whom I talked in other parts of the territory. And, as we journeyed westward, tales of cannibalism became increasingly frequent, some of them fortified with chapter and verse.

While crossing Lake Tanganyika on the *Duc de Brabant* I noticed the Scandinavian skipper regarding my servant, Amoni, with a speculative eye. Amoni, by the way, though slight in stature, was the best-looking native I saw in Central Africa. As my traveling-companion, Barton, once remarked, he would have offered an irresistible temptation to a hungry cannibal.

"Are you planning to take that boy through with you to Boma?" the captain demanded.

I told him that such was my intention.

"You 'd best not let him come back alone," he remarked dryly. "Better tell him to wait in Boma

or Matadi until he finds some European who is coming this way who will hire him as a servant for the journey. Otherwise, like as not, he 'll be enticed ashore at one of the river villages and scoffed."

"What do you mean by 'scoffed'?" I asked him.

"Killed and eaten by cannibals," was the blunt answer.

"Do you mean to tell me," I said incredulously, "that cannibalism still exists along the main river? I supposed that it was still occasionally practised among some of the wild tribes in the back country, but I have been assured that it has been wiped out along the main routes of travel long ago."

"It still exists nearly everywhere in the Congo," the captain asserted, "though the Belgians won't admit it because they think it reflects on their administration. But they might as well try to wipe out the natives' faith in witch-doctors and fetishism. But of course it isn't nearly as common as it was, for the law is being enforced much more rigidly than formerly, and your cannibal knows that if he is caught he will dance on nothing at the end of a piece of hemp.





A CANNIBAL OF THE CONGO

Sullen, saturnine, sinister, and cruel, he personifies the very spirit of Inner Africa

“Don’t get the idea,” he continued, “that cannibalism is confined to the wild tribes, for it is n’t. I’ve known more than one case of so-called civilized natives, fellows who have been to mission schools and that sort of thing, eating human flesh when they got the chance. Before the war I commanded a small steamer on the lower river. One night my engineer—a very quick-witted, intelligent nigger he was too—went ashore at a village where we had tied up to attend the funeral of a woman. I think she was the wife of one of his friends. I happened to be on deck when he came aboard with a parcel, wrapped in plantain-leaves, under his arm. He was so secretive and mysterious about it that I made him open it, thinking he might have gotten hold of a bottle of gin. It contained the breast of a woman. But when I charged him with being a cannibal he grew very indignant. He said that the woman had n’t been killed, but had died from natural causes, and that her relatives and friends had cut up the body in order to prevent so much good chow going to waste.”

Being new to the country at the time, I did not take this lurid story very seriously, for in other

frontier lands I had heard old-timers relate similar yarns in order to impress tenderfeet.

The subject of cannibalism did not come up again until, some weeks later, I was steaming down the Congo on the stern-wheeler *Tabora*. Captain Swenson, the Swedish skipper, whose experience in the country goes back to the old Free State days, had invited me to have a "sundowner" with him on the bridge. Though in the old navy it was customary to begin drinking when the sun was over the yard-arm, in the African tropics those who value their health seldom touch spirits until the sun has reached the western skyline. The white houses of Lisala had dropped astern, and darkness was descending on the mighty river.

"Over there," said the captain abruptly, pointing to a long, low island black with jungle, "is where the *Ville de Bruges* went down. Her skipper was my best friend."

"Was he drowned?" I inquired.

"No," was the startling answer. "He was eaten. He and his crew. Only one man escaped. The steamer struck a sand-bar and capsized. The captain and crew managed to keep afloat until



natives came out from the shore in canoes and saved them. But their rescue was only temporary. For, once on shore, their rescuers speared them, cut the bodies up, put them in the cooking-pot, and ate them. And it all happened within sight of an English mission station!"

Now, this particular story is quite true. It is part of the bloody history of the great, dark river. But there is no doubt that many of the tales of cannibalism one hears in the Congo are either greatly exaggerated or wholly without foundation. Sometimes, as I have already remarked, an old hand seeks to amuse himself by relating fictitious cannibal stories in order to test the credulity of a new-comer. But more frequently, I think, he implicitly believes the preposterous tales he tells, for there seems to be something in the climate of Africa which stimulates the imagination and unconsciously encourages honest, sober-minded men to exaggeration. The Boers have a proverb which says, "Believe only half of what you see in Africa and nothing of what you hear," a sound maxim for the traveler in the Congo.

The truth of the matter appears to be that, though cannibalism has been pretty well eradi-

cated along the main river, where Europeans are comparatively numerous and the hand of the law is firm, it is still common up the Kasai, the Sankuru, and the Ubanghi. In these remote districts the Government, realizing its impotence, finds it wise to leave the cannibals alone. This, however, is not due to indifference but to the difficulty which inevitably would be experienced in obtaining evidence against the offenders; for in the absence of the body it is not easy to produce proof of the murder, and it has been found almost impossible to induce natives themselves to testify in such cases. But, as I have explained in my chapter on the Human Leopards, one can hardly include in the category of cannibals those tribes which commit ritual murders and eat only the heart or liver of their victim, any more than one can classify as a "wet" a person who partakes of wine at communion.

I am inclined to think that the war was responsible for a great increase in cannibalism in Central Africa. The liking for human flesh is an acquired taste, like that for caviar or Camembert cheese or whisky, but, once acquired, it becomes ingrained in the individual. To a normal and healthy Afri-

can a craving for human meat is no more natural than to a European, though, in view of his upbringing and early associations, it may be questioned whether it is ever actually repulsive to him. But during the campaign in German East Africa soldiers and porters from non-cannibal tribes found themselves in the company of uniformed savages who enjoyed human flesh, and many of the former undoubtedly acquired the habit through having tried it from curiosity, just as many Americans become fond of snails after dining on them as a sort of gastronomic adventure at *l'Escargot* in Paris.

There is also a dietetic side to the question. Many tribes are unquestionably driven to cannibalism by hunger, for in the Congo basin, where meat is very scarce on account of the ravages of the tsetse-fly, cannibalism is comparatively common, whereas among tribes that own herds of cattle, such as the Masai or the Zulu, it is unknown. Even highly civilized persons may be forced by hunger to adopt human fare, as witness the terrible story of the survivors of the Donner party, who, when cut off by the snows in a remote valley of the High Sierras during the gold-rush

to California, lived for a whole winter on the bodies of their dead companions. It is, by the way, an interesting commentary on the dietetic value of human flesh, as the English traveler, Frederick Migeod, points out, that tribes which get no meat are invariably weak and degenerate, while those which get a fairly abundant meat diet out of their own kind are for the most part of fine physique.

The same authority states that an old missionary from Samoa, who had spent a long life in the Pacific, told him that he had once inquired of a convert, who had been a cannibal, whether human flesh was really appetizing according to non-cannibal standards. "You white men think pork is a very tasty meat," was the reformed man-eater's reply, "but pork is not to be compared with human flesh for delicious flavor." When I was in the Congo I addressed somewhat similar inquiries to another ex-cannibal, now a hymn-singing convert who occupies a position of trust as gate-keeper at a mission station. I had always wanted to know what were considered the "choice cuts" of a human being. He was somewhat reticent at first, but, when pressed for an answer, said that, though tastes differed in various locali-

ties, the epicures of his tribe considered the greatest delicacies to be the toes and the palms of the hands.

In the Congo one hears all sorts of fantastic stories anent cannibalism, some of them true, some of them half true, others pure fabrications. According to Migeod, who is exceptionally well informed regarding the natives of Equatorial Africa, the Ngwaka, a cannibal tribe inhabiting the country to the north of Lisala, have one most peculiar custom. If an adult, the victim is unceremoniously despatched with a spear; but if a child, its head is held in a pot of boiling water until it is dead, when the body is cut up and roasted like ordinary meat. Among certain other peoples, notably in French Equatorial Africa, human meat is not considered fit to eat until it has been kept for a considerable length of time, the carcass being nailed to a tree and left there until the flesh has acquired the rich, ripe flavor of well-hung venison. Which reminds me that an officer who served in the Ashanti campaign once told me that long before the British troops reached King Prempeh's capital they could smell the horrible stench of his crucifixion-grove.

The psychology of your real cannibal, the one

who eats human flesh because he likes it, is a curious one. He is a born killer. He will murder man, woman, or child as unconcernedly as a butcher slaughters beeves. If he is secretive about it, it is not because he is ashamed of being a cannibal but because he is afraid of the law, in which respect he is not greatly different from numerous Americans who habitually flout the Eighteenth Amendment. Just as a buyer for a packing-house estimates the amount of meat on a calf or hog, so the cannibal looks with a hungry and speculative eye on every person he meets, with the possibility of a meal always at the back of his mind. To him everything is edible that is human.

I have frequently been asked if the white man traveling in the bush is not in danger of being killed and eaten by cannibals. I do not think so. True, there are certain wild tribes of the remote hinterland among which it would not be safe to venture without an escort; but, generally speaking, your cannibal, no matter how ferocious among his own kind, is usually an arrant coward where white men are concerned. It is a significant fact, however, and one which goes to prove how well

founded are the stories of cannibalism, that porters and servants will frequently refuse to pass beyond their own tribal boundaries, no matter how great the monetary inducements that may be offered them, for the reason that if they do they run a very good chance of being captured and eaten on their way home. My own boy, Amoni, was so terrified at the idea of making the long journey from the West Coast to his home in British territory unaccompanied that, as I learned later, he remained at the American mission station in Matadi for upward of a month waiting to find a European under whose protection he could travel as far as Lake Tanganyika. His patience was eventually rewarded, for he found employment with a Belgian who was going through to the Katanga. But, as Amoni wrote me later: "My new *bwana* forget to pay me. He not a good man."

Though, in traveling through the Congo, I frequently encountered ferocious-looking natives armed with broad-bladed spears and murderous knives, their bodies covered with tribal cicatrizations and their teeth filed to sharp points—the invariable sign of the man-eater—it was hard to

believe that they were the cannibals of whom I had heard since boyhood. They were so aggressively grotesque that it seemed rather as though they were like the Indians one sees at a Wild West show, dressed up for the occasion and playing a part. And I was obsessed with the same feeling of unreality when, lounging in my comfortable deck-chair or yarning with the Swedish captain on the bridge, we slipped silently past peaceful sylvan scenes which recalled, without actually resembling, other scenes on the Columbia, the Okechobee, the St. Lawrence at the Thousand Islands. It was not easy to convince myself that we were actually in the heart of the Dark Continent and that not a mile back from that peaceful, forest-fringed shore-line were still practised barbaric rites and revolting customs.

I was brought to a realization of the fact that Africa is still Africa, however, at Basoko, a military post at the confluence of the Aruwimi, which was built during the Arab wars and is still the center of a savage and somewhat troublesome population. The little fort with its crenelated, whitewashed ramparts rising from the river-bank, its massive gateway flanked by turrets loopholed



for musketry, has a medieval appearance which is strangely incongruous in these equatorial wilds.

While strolling about the post I encountered a rather dejected-looking Babali under the guard of a native soldier. My attention was drawn to him by his unusually elaborate cicatrizations, his body being a mass of mounds and ridges from neck to knees. Passed between his legs was the usual strip of filthy bark-cloth, reddened with camwood. His hair was mopped out beneath a monkey-skin cap, from which parrot-feathers of gorgeous colors stuck out in all directions. Adorning his arms and ankles were several pounds of brass wire. From his neck hung a string of bright blue beads interspersed with leopard's claws. But, despite his fantastic get-up, he seemed a gentle, friendly old man, though when he smiled I noticed that his teeth had been filed until they resembled those of a wolf rather than a human being. He was under arrest, I assumed, for some petty misdemeanor—non-payment of the poll-tax perhaps—and would doubtless be let off with a warning and a small fine.

As time hung heavy on my hands, for several hours had to be idled away while the steamer was

taking on cargo and fuel, I entered into negotiations with the old fellow for a curious little rattle, made of wicker, which he wore slung from his belt. After some haggling as to the price it eventually passed into my possession, the guard, who spoke a few words of French and Swahili, good-naturedly acting as a go-between in the transaction. But the necklace, which had likewise taken my fancy, the Babali obstinately refused to part with, even when I offered him the equivalent of half a dollar for it, a small fortune for a native of those parts.

As I was turning away I was joined by a steamer acquaintance, a White Father in whose company I had traveled down the river for many days. He exchanged a few words in some native dialect with the soldier.

"Do you know who that native is that you bought the rattle from?" he asked me as we strolled down the mango-lined avenue to the steamer-landing.

"No," I replied. "He seems to be a good-natured, harmless old chap, though."

"He 's the chief of a big cannibal tribe in the back country," was the startling answer. "He 's

just been brought in to stand trial, so the soldier told me, for killing and eating one of his wives."

I remarked a little earlier in this chapter that I believed that Europeans were, generally speaking, in no danger from cannibals. But when I was in Bolobo I was told a story by an English trader which would seem to cast some doubt on this assertion. He said that on one occasion, while on an ivory-buying trip in the interior, he camped for the night near a large village in the bush. As the natives, who were in a recalcitrant mood, refused to sell him food, as the law requires, he went into the village to interview the chief in person.

"You think you are a big white chief," said the savage truculently, "but I am a heap bigger white chief than you are.

"Because," said the native, patting his stomach, "I have three other white men here."

As my informant had had several "sundowners" before beginning his recital, the story may be apocryphal. Then, again, it may not. In Africa it is never safe to brand a statement as untrue merely because it seems incredible.

Not even those who have lived in the country for years can do more than hazard a conjecture as to the extent to which cannibalism is actually practised to-day in the Congo. One man will assert that practically every native will eat human flesh when the opportunity offers if he can do so without being caught. Yet perhaps the next person whom you meet will assure you that the stories of cannibalism have been ridiculously exaggerated, that the practice is confined to certain savage tribes, and that even among them it is rapidly dying out. But, even after making due allowance for falsehood and exaggeration, there seems to be little doubt that cannibalism is still exceedingly common over vast areas of the Belgian Congo, though there are few subjects about which it is more difficult to get dependable information from the natives themselves. All information must, indeed, be hearsay, for the only person, aside from the cannibals themselves, who could give first-hand evidence is their victim; and he seldom lives to tell the tale.

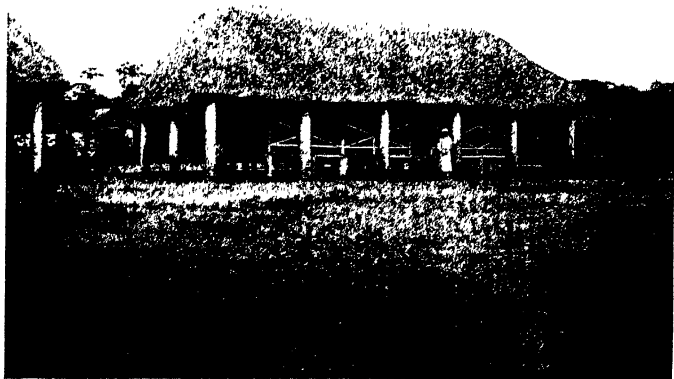
I say seldom, because there is one authentic case of a candidate for the cooking-pot who survived to tell the story. Of all the tales that I

heard in Africa—trustworthy ones, I mean—it is the most amazing. Its central figure is a Portuguese trader who still does business at Lusambo, on the Sankuru. Some years ago, while on a trading-trip down river, he was captured by cannibals and tied to a tree in the bush preparatory to being eaten. But, by one of those coincidences that are not always confined to fiction, a steamer short of fuel happened to stop there to cut wood, his cries were heard, and he was found a little way in from the bank. His body was marked all over with lines drawn in white clay, so that he looked like a sketch drawn on a blackboard for a class in anatomy, his captors having hit on this method of designating the portions which they had reserved for their own.

Your cannibal does not restrict himself to “meat that once talked,” as he calls human flesh, however. He is not fastidious in his tastes. Anything that ever walked on legs is meat to him. This was illustrated by a story told me by a Canadian mining engineer whom I met on the Upper Congo. While going down the Kasai in a canoe his paddlers saw floating in the stream the carcass of a dog. Judging from the odor and the

color, it had been dead a long time. But, disregarding his protests, his boys fished it out and, upon halting for the night, built a fire and cooked it. They were frankly puzzled and a little offended when the Canadian declined the portion they offered him on the plea that its odor was nauseating.

“But, *bwama*,” the headman protested, “we don’t eat the smell. We eat the dog.”



A Ritz-Carlton of the Congo: the rest-house at Malela



The Congo's Cannon-Ball Express: the single decrepit passenger coach is about the size of an old-fashioned horse-drawn street-car

LUXURY ON THE LUALABA





## CHAPTER XII

### EBONY AND IVORY

THE series of cataracts which make navigation impossible for more than two hundred miles below Kongolo have necessitated the construction of a narrow-gage railway running across the plateau cut through by the river. Owing to the absence of sleeping accommodation on the distinctly primitive trains, the journey must be broken at Malela, where the *Compagnie des Grands Lacs Africains*, which controls rail and river transportation in the Upper Congo, has erected for the use of its passengers the best and cleanest rest-houses that we found in Central Africa. They are of the type known as "Danish huts"—why Danish I have no idea—each consisting of a platform raised on piles above the ground to avoid dampness. On this platform two small, iron-roofed houses, each about ten feet square, stand side by side, the whole being covered by a broad thatched roof of palm-fronds,

just as a fly covers a tent. This method of building two houses within a house, as it were, makes for greater coolness, as the thatched fly prevents the sun from beating upon the iron roofs of the huts, which, in turn, guard the traveler against the annoyance of having the insects and reptiles which inhabit thatched roofs constantly dropping in his wash-bowl or on his bed.

Beyond Malela begins a vast belt of equatorial forest which stretches across eight degrees of latitude. Through this the train jogs along for hour after hour, the narrow strip of cleared land between the line and the edge of the jungle being occupied by an unbroken series of native cassava-patches and banana-plantations, which provide their owners with sufficient food to meet their simple needs with a minimum of exertion.

The very fact that the native has so few wants is the greatest obstacle to the development of Equatorial Africa. For no country can be developed without labor, and in Africa the greatest difficulty is experienced in persuading the native to work. There is nothing to offer him that he really longs for. And it is obvious that if you have nothing in the way of recompense which

really tempts him he cannot be expected to show much eagerness for work. In a land so hot that clothing is a discomfort, where a house can be built in a few hours from bamboo and palm, where he can raise enough food to support himself and his family by merely scratching the ground and scattering a few seeds, where innumerable varieties of edible fruits are to be had for the picking and fish are found in abundance in the rivers, why, argues the native, should he exert himself?

It is an interesting sociological and economic fact, when you stop to think about it, that in the African bush a man and his wife together form a self-contained community; they have not to depend on any one else, nor need they come in contact with any one. The two together, man and wife, are their own tillers, sowers, reapers, gleaners, winnowers, millers, and bakers; likewise their own weavers, tailors, potters, carpenters, and furniture-makers. Almost the only things they cannot provide for themselves are certain articles of hardware—spear-heads, fish-hooks, knives, and axes—and they can obtain enough money to purchase these by the sale of produce or by a few days' work each year. While this condition ex-

ists there is no specialization in any form of art or craft. Everything that is required is made at home, and, as might be expected, everything is of the roughest, as it has been from time beyond reckoning. The African native is neither a producer nor a consumer in the larger sense of those terms.

The first thing that must be attempted, then, with peoples such as these is to bring them up to the state of consumers by devising some means of stimulating their wants, for, once they really want something, they will become producers in order to obtain it. Only when they arrive at this stage of development can they claim the right of consideration as useful units in that vast economic organization which the world has now become. But, it may be argued by some, if the African prefers to live in idleness, if he does not want the conveniences and luxuries of civilization, how does it concern us? The answer is simple. The black man who grows cotton in the Sudan or raises rubber in the Congo is helping to support the family of a cotton-spinner in New England, to provide work for the employees of tire-factories in Ohio, while the latter are helping to pay the wages of



#### ARABISEES

These Mohammedanized natives, who either have Arab blood in their veins or have come under A. r. b influence, are refreshingly clean and trim in their red tarbooshes and white *kauzas*



an African laborer. Again, the native who raises coffee or cocoa is entering into the daily life of millions of white households, while he in return receives in exchange for his labor the wherewithal to provide himself with cottons and salt and powder and hardware and sewing-machines. The black man who is absolutely self-contained, neither producing for export nor requiring any imports, has no place in the world's work. That is why so many close students of African conditions have become convinced that in the institution of some system of forced labor—ugly as is the name—lies the sole hope of developing the vast resources of the continent and raising the status of the native himself.

Kindu, the down-stream terminus of the railway from Kongolo, is literally hewn out of the jungle, into which one steps straight from the back doors of its bungalows. Here, distinguished from their barbarian brothers of the forest by their white *kansas* and a thin veneer of Mohammedan civilization, we begin to see the Arabisés, as the natives who have come under Arab influence are called, for Kindu is the chief trade cen-

ter of the Manyema country, the historic scene of the operations of Tippu Tib and his traders in "black" and white ivory. One cannot withhold a certain amount of admiration from the original Arab and Swahili ivory-traders, who faced innumerable hardships and dangers on their long journeys into the interior, to come back with their precious caravans of tusks. Though responsible, through their slave-trading, for much wanton misery and suffering, they must also be credited with bringing to these remote regions a certain degree of civilization. The horrors of slave-trading have often been dwelt upon—though it should be remembered that the practice was not regarded as particularly brutal by the average African, who kept slaves himself when he could afford it and regarded slavery as a matter of course—but what has been persistently ignored is that these same slaves were subject to a much better lot, generally speaking, than would have been theirs had they remained in their own homes. It is a curious and significant fact, if you will pause to give it consideration, that the only Africans who have attained any degree of civilization are to be found among the descendants of former slaves, the negroes of America and the West Indies.



The voyage down the Lualaba from Kindu to Ponthierville takes from two to four days, according to the height of the water; and it is, in many respects, the most fascinating portion of the whole transcontinental journey. The river, fed by great tributaries—the Elila, the Ulindi, the Lowa, and the Lilu—which have their sources in the highlands to the west of Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika, widens rapidly, and from being a swiftly flowing stream, barely nine hundred yards wide at the Sendwe Rapids, it swells into a large lake, four or five miles across, at Ponthierville.

We are now in the Great Forest, and for fourteen hundred miles without a break the river runs between densely wooded banks. For many days we steamed between shores black with mangrove-swamps, the curiously shaped trees, their trunks perched high up on the roots, suggesting an old woman who is afraid of getting her feet wet. From the branches hang snake-like, adventitious creepers, sometimes twenty feet long and as thick as a man's wrist, which reach down to the water, where they eventually become new stems. The mangroves continued until the water was no longer brackish; thenceforward a dense tropical forest reigned supreme, hanging over the steep

slopes of the shore in a continuous curtain of bright green verdure, or, in a slightly different form, covering the banks and the innumerable islands in midstream with a blanket of impenetrable jungle. Oil-palms there were by the million, and numerous varieties of taller trees whose names I did not know, many of them draped from the top with beautiful creepers; for even the palms take to creeping, and it is quite common to see their fronds high up among the branches of a forest giant. For the tendency of many of the plants forming the tropical forest is to escape from the dense undergrowth with its perpetual shade, to reach the light, to themselves gain a place in the sun; very tall trees, with creepers and parasitic plants living high up on their hosts, are the result.

The greater density of the foliage, the thick undergrowth, and the tangle of vines and creepers which envelop the trunks, combine to produce a darkness and dampness that are quite foreign to American forests. Save in the early morning and toward twilight the forests of the Congo are strangely silent; the rustle of falling leaves, the whisper of the breeze in the tree-tops, the un-

canny cries of strange birds, the occasional crash of the undergrowth beneath the weight of an animal or snake, are the only sounds. Pressing on, you at length see a glint of light piercing the oppressive gloom; the prevailing color-tones change from purple to brown, to green, to greenish yellow; the forest ends abruptly; and you emerge into a grassy glade drenched in dazzling sunlight. You feel as though you had been translated in a moment from autumn to midsummer.

The loneliness of the Lualaba is weird and haunting, for the villages are few and far between. At long intervals, however, you see a narrow strip on the river's bank which has been cleared to make room for one of the curious community dwellings which grow more common as one descends the river—really a line of huts joined together so as to form a great barrack in some cases a quarter of a mile long and sheltering hundreds of families. The chief industry at all these Lualaba villages, as well as those on the Congo proper, is the collection of palm-kernels, and the making of palm-oil; for we are now entering the domain of Lord Leverhulme, the English soap-king, who climbed on his soap-

boxes from a clerkship in a Lancashire grocery store to a British peerage and one of the greatest fortunes in the world.

The palm-oil of commerce is obtained from the fruit of the oil-palm. The fruit, each specimen of which is about the size of a large plum, grows at the top of the tree, sometimes sixty or seventy feet above the ground, in a thick cluster, somewhat resembling a huge bunch of grapes, known as a *régime*. It is gathered by natives, who, with the aid of a loop made from a liana, literally walk up the tree. At the top the worker leans against the loop, just as a telegraph lineman employs a somewhat similar contrivance while working at the top of a pole, and with a heavy knife hacks at the *régime* until it falls. As numerous fatalities have been caused by the loop slipping when the bark of the tree is wet, the natives will not cut fruit during the rains.

The outer portion of the fruit, known as the pericarp, consists almost entirely of yellow oil incased in a thick skin, but a finer and more valuable grade of oil is found in the kernel. The fruit is boiled down in local refineries, and the oil thus obtained is shipped to England in great

drums to be used in the manufacture of soap, toilet preparations, and a hundred other articles of commerce. The kernels, which are more valuable, after being thoroughly dried, are packed in bags and sent to the English refineries, where they are broken open and their contents used for salad-oil or margarin. The oil-palm comes into bearing within seven years after being planted, but throughout that period and afterward it requires constant attention if it is not to be strangled or its vitality impaired by the voracious tropical undergrowth, which spreads with amazing rapidity. The palmeries are rapidly replacing the rubber plantations as the Congo's chief source of agricultural wealth, for vegetable oil has come to have almost as numerous uses in the world of commerce as the mineral oil which produced the Rockefeller millions.

Though the fertile soil of the Congo will grow anything under the tropical sun, it is a curious fact that food—fresh food, I mean—is almost unobtainable, and Europeans must largely depend on tinned things, which is bad for the Europeans. Sheep and goats, fowl and eggs, rice and flour, when obtainable at all, are almost prohibitive in

price because the state has never thought it worth its while to teach the people even the rudiments of stock-raising and agriculture, and the natives themselves are too indolent to engage in either on their own initiative. Hence, in spite of the extraordinary natural richness of the Congo, the passengers on the steamers are fed on tinned beef from Chicago and Kansas City, dried fish from Norway, condensed milk from Switzerland, and tinned butter from Denmark.

Meat in particular is hard to obtain, for the tsetse-flies do not permit of cattle-raising, and, were it not for the game, there would be nothing. Between Lake Tanganyika and the mouth of the Congo, a distance of more than two thousand miles, I did not see a single cow—barring a small herd of cattle which the fathers of one of the Catholic missionary orders have succeeded in raising at their station near Nouvelle Anvers—and only occasionally sheep and goats. Wild pigs are fairly plentiful, and the best meal I had in the Congo, at the American mission station at Bolenge, consisted of roast wild pig, sweet potatoes, corn on the cob, pancakes with cane syrup, and grape-fruit. Fish, too, is a comparatively





THE LUALABA AT PONTHERVILLE

Here the river broadens out into a great lake, several miles across, before narrowing down to enter the long series of cataracts and rapids which culminate in the Stanley Falls



rare thing, and this in spite of the fact that the rivers teem with them, some of those caught near Stanley Falls being so large that it takes two men to carry one of them. There are plenty of mango, orange, and avocado trees, while bananas and pineapples grow wild everywhere, yet we experienced great difficulty in getting fruit, and when we did find it it was usually dear and poor.

The food on the river-steamers was so abominable—the *pièce de résistance* usually being tough goat-steak stewed in hippo-fat—that we were compelled to eke it out with delicacies from our chop-box or with tinned things purchased from the quartermaster's store. At length, growing desperate, I sent Amoni ashore to buy some eggs. With some difficulty he procured three—at a franc apiece. I learned, however, that when it became bruited abroad that we ate eggs it created much unfavorable comment among Amoni's native friends, since the egg is, in the eyes of the African, a rather debased article of diet. And, if we must eat eggs, why were we so particular about their being fresh? Why did we not wait, the natives demanded, until there was a chick inside?

Ponthierville, the next town of importance below Kindu, is a little, forest-girt tropical paradise, its red brick bungalows smothered in crimson bougainvillea, its well-kept roads lined with flaming fire-trees, set on a grassy slope overlooking the great, swift-flowing river just at the point where it suddenly narrows down to a quarter of its width on entering another long series of cataracts and rapids, the famous Stanley Falls. Not so long ago it was a populous and busy place, the capital of a subprovince; but, with the acquisition of Ruanda-Urundi (that portion of German East Africa which was mandated to Belgium), the seat of government was moved further to the eastward, and Ponthierville, its numerous bungalows deserted, its long rows of barracks left to the tenancy of bats, was relegated to dwell in the memories of its past, its total European population having been reduced, when we were there, to five men, a woman, and a child. But its sweeping lawns and tree-shaded avenues are still kept in perfect order; it is reasonably free from insect pests; and the appalling heat which prevails throughout the Congo Basin is somewhat tempered by a gentle breeze from the river, which

at this point assumes almost the proportions of a lake.

We spent three days in Ponthierville, during which my companion, Barton, won the undying gratitude of the entire white community by repairing the town's only gramophone. For, unless you have known what it means to live for month after month, year after year, in a place sans theaters, sans movies, sans newspapers, sans libraries, sans electricity and ice, sans comforts and amusements of every kind, you cannot realize how fraught with real tragedy is the breakdown of the only gramophone. But I must confess that my own enthusiasm over Barton's achievement rapidly waned after the entire white community gathered on the upper gallery of the trading-post, directly outside the doors of our bedrooms, and forced the restored but still somewhat feeble instrument to squeak out such ancient classics as "My Hero," "So Long, Letty," and "Alexander's Rag-Time Band" until far into the small hours of the morning. If we had had to stay in Ponthierville much longer I should have stolen the instrument of torture and dropped it in the river.

As it was inviting sunstroke to stir out of doors between the hours of nine and four, when the mercury frequently climbed to 130, I spent most of the daylight hours in the comparative coolness of the trading-factory watching the Belgian trader barter with the natives for ivory and other products. When the natives did not take their pay in trade-goods, a most unusual and interesting form of currency was used in these transactions. As the people of Ponthierville are largely engaged in fishing, the local unit of currency is a piece of fish-net of a standard size. Three of these are equal to a rough piece of iron, somewhat resembling a spear-head, called a *shoka*. The *shoka* would require some working to convert it into a real spear-head, it is true, but it represents a certain definite quantity of well-worked iron, and as such has its own specific value. There are double *shokas* and five-*shoka* pieces, and there is also the great *ngbele*, which likewise bears a faint resemblance to a spear-head, or would but for the fact that it is six feet long. Ten of these, I was told, would purchase a canoe forty feet long, and half of that number would buy a fine, upstanding wife. Perhaps I ought to mention at





A WOOD POST ON THE UPPER CONGO

At frequent intervals along the navigable reaches of the river are wood posts where the steamers stop to take on fuel, which is cut in four-foot lengths and stacked in cords or "brasses." Observe the row of elephant-tusks awaiting shipment

this point that, like everything else in the Congo, the price of wives has increased enormously in recent years. I was told that before the war you could buy a comely damsel, sound in wind and limb, for fifty francs, or its equivalent in beads, printed cottons, or old iron. Now, however, a woman costs at least five times that sum. This rise in price of pulchritude is due, so someone remarked, to the high cost of loving.

Though, as I have just explained, the medium of exchange in the Ponhierville district is the *shoka*, the popular currency throughout Central Africa is cowries. They are small, gray-white shells from the Indian Ocean—*Cypræa annulus* is their scientific name—and are generally carried strung on a length of raffia-fiber, several hundred to a string. Their value is not great—about three thousand to a dollar, if I remember rightly—but their bulk is considerable, so that in going on *safari*, when large quantities of cowries must be taken along to be used in buying food, several porters are required to carry the money. In the larger towns one has little or no use for these shells, but in the back-blocks of the Congo they are as universally used as cash are in the interior

of China. In several villages on the Lualaba we saw girls with their dowries, in the form of numerous strings of this shell money, festooned about their necks.

At every port at which we touched between Kindu and Ponthierville, and again from Stanleyville onward, numbers of long, curving, oddly shaped packages, sewed in burlap or sometimes incased in wicker, were piled on the wharf awaiting the coming of the steamer. For we had now come to the ports where they trade in elephant-tusks—"points" is the local name for them—the ivory from which, in back-country villages in Connecticut, are cut the piano-keys and billiard-balls and toilet-articles of civilization.

Stanleyville is one of the great ivory-markets of the world, though when we were there business was dull because of a drop in prices. The usual price of ivory is about two dollars a pound but during the war it rose to five times that sum. A sudden slump came with the close of hostilities, however, but the African native, who knows nothing of the law of supply and demand, refused to accept lower prices. Consequently, hundreds of tons of ivory are stored in the native villages waiting for the price to rise again.



Every one seems to dabble in the business in some form or other: not merely the natives, by whom the great majority of elephants are killed, and the white professional ivory-hunters; but the traders, mostly Europeans or Arabs, who act as middlemen between the hunters and the big purchasers in Europe and America; and even the officials, nearly all of whom are eager to buy a few good tusks on speculation. Indeed, when we sailed from Matadi, it seemed as though nearly every one of the three hundred or more homeward-bound passengers on the *Anversville* had brought at least one tusk aboard the steamer as part of his personal baggage.

As the natives are not permitted to possess modern weapons—for the five-feet-of-gas-pipe trade-guns hardly count—they are compelled in hunting the elephant to exercise great ingenuity and display extreme daring. In certain districts the natives slaughter the pachyderm by means of a great sharpened balk of timber, rigged up on a sort of platform over a path which elephants are known to use in going down to water. It is fitted with a trigger, which, when the elephant steps upon it, brings the timber hurtling down upon the animal's neck. A variation of this method is a

tremendous spear, sometimes weighing fifty pounds, which, released in a similar manner, drops like the blade of a guillotine and pierces the animal's brain. Still another method, the execution of which requires extraordinary skill and courage, is for the native to creep out on the limb of a tree beneath which elephants are accustomed to seek shelter from the sun and, when the beast passes underneath, to drop upon its back and drive a heavy knife into its spinal column. Frantic with pain, the elephant swings up his trunk to seize this enemy who has so unexpectedly dropped from nowhere, but the hunter slashes at it with his razor-bladed weapon. The trunk, the most sensitive portion of his body, once disabled, the elephant is helpless and stumbles on, to fall dead eventually from loss of blood. Again, the hunter, having located a herd, will approach up wind until close to his chosen victim—a comparatively easy matter this—and then drive a heavy spear with a barbed point into the animal's belly. The barb, like that on a fish-spear but larger, makes it impossible for the elephant to pull the weapon out, and, though it is sometimes necessary for the native to follow the trail of blood for days, the



#### MOTHERHOOD

This Bas-Congo lady belongs to what would be termed in an American community "the fast set"



animal finally becomes so weakened by the steel dragging at its vitals that it collapses and can be dispatched without trouble. I bought one of these elephant-spears from a native hunter to add to my collection of strange weapons; a murderous affair, six feet long and as heavy as a whaler's harpoon. A large number of elephants are also killed with trade-guns, which, despite the imminent danger of their bursting, the owner loads to the muzzle with black powder and slugs. Then, creeping up on his quarry, he discharges the weapon at point-blank range.

Many of the tusks exported from the Congo are what is known as "found" ivory, which means that they have been found by the natives on animals that have died in the forest from natural causes. According to the law, all "found" ivory is the property of the Government, which, however, is seldom able to make good its claim. But by far the greater number of points are brought in by professional hunters, native and European, who encounter innumerable risks and frequently face appalling risks in the pursuit of this perilous profession. The stories of some of these men—such as Rogers, the American ele-

phant-poacher who, after defying for years the efforts of the British, French, and Belgian authorities to capture him, was killed by Belgian *askari* in the Lado Enclave—are epics of courage, resourcefulness, and daring. Indeed, could the truth be known, it would be found that many of the balls that click so gaily on the green tables of American billiard-rooms, many of the piano-keys swept by the white fingers of lovely women, are stained with human blood.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### SLEEPING-SICKNESS

Beware, oh, beware, of the Bight of Bennin,  
For few come out though many go in.

SUCH was the grim warning which a generation ago rang in the ears of those who were summoned by trade, duty, or adventure to the ports of West Africa and the Congo. For that humid and miasmal littoral has always borne an evil name, and to be ordered there was, until very recently, considered almost equivalent to receiving a death sentence. Its sinister reputation was vividly brought home to me when, some twenty years ago, I was considering the acceptance of a post in the administration of the Congo Free State; for the only insurance-company which would even consider me as a risk was Lloyd's, which, as a friend cheerfully remarked, "will take a chance on anything if the premium is large enough."

Perhaps the most wide-spread and deeply rooted misunderstanding of Africa is the belief that most

of the continent is dangerous to health and life. The conception of the West Coast and the Congo as the "white man's graveyard" seems to prevail in every part of the world. While it is true that parts of Africa are distinctly unsafe for peoples of the temperate zones and unhealthy for the Africans themselves, it is certain that its dangers have been very greatly exaggerated. This assertion is supported in some measure by my own experience, for in the last two decades I have visited Africa many times, I have spent longer or shorter periods at all the so-called "plague-spots" on both its seaboard, I have traversed four fifths of the distance from Cairo to the Cape, and have crossed the continent from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic without once incurring anything more serious than a hard cold.

Africa's reputation for unhealthfulness, as the report of the Phelps Stokes Fund Mission reminds us, was the result of the tragic experience of those who entered the continent without knowledge of the local conditions or indifferent to the perils that always confront pioneers in a new country. One has only to read the history of North American exploration and colonization



to be reminded that our own frontiersmen and settlers similarly paid the price of empire in appalling death-rates from climate, disease, lack of food, and warfare with the natives. The ill repute in which the equatorial regions of Africa have long been held was further due to the reckless behavior of irresponsible adventurers, who indulged in excessive drinking and the other vices which so often mar the early stages of tropical colonization.

Yet the tragedies which attended so many exploratory, commercial, and evangelistic ventures in Africa during the early years are almost all traceable to defiance of the most rudimentary rules of hygiene or to a few diseases, practically all of which have since been found to be preventable by comparatively simple precautions. Indeed, it is not the slightest exaggeration to assert that Africa will respond to modern methods of sanitation and hygiene in exactly the same way as other regions possessing similar climatic and social conditions, for the darkest spots of the Dark Continent were never more menacing to health than were Cuba, Panama, and Guayaquil before Gorgas swept them clean of filth and insects. This

is convincingly proved by the results of the campaign against mosquitos by the British colonial authorities on the dreaded West Coast, where the death-rate among the whites has been brought down to that of normal groups in Europe and America.

In order to form an intelligent estimate of the healthfulness of Africa one must sharply differentiate between the great plateaus, which even in the tropics are sufficiently lofty and well drained to insure favorable climatic conditions, and the low-lying areas whose miasmatic swamps and steaming jungles are so vast that it is impossible for the inhabitants to war successfully against the mosquito and the tsetse-fly. Most people, I have found, conceive of Africa as divided roughly into three parts: the Sahara, a worthless expanse of sun-scorched sand; Equatoria, a broad zone of low-lying forest, swamp, and jungle; and South Africa, which is generally supposed to be hot but tolerably healthful. But if you will take the trouble to examine the topography of the continent you will quickly perceive the fallacy of such a conception, for you will find that even tropical Africa contains a surprisingly large number of

plateaus where the climate is practically that of the temperate zone. The Congo Basin, for example, is by no means so low as is commonly supposed or as its name would suggest, for it has an average altitude of one thousand feet. Angola, almost half a million square miles in extent, includes numerous highland areas with a climate both healthful and delightful. British East Africa (Uganda, Kenya Colony, and Tanganyika Territory) is to all intents and purposes one enormous table-land broken by numerous lofty peaks, one of them, Kilimanjaro, rising to a height of more than nineteen thousand feet. And all the colonies along the West Coast have some elevated regions where the climate is by no means unpleasant, for heat, after all, is not so much a matter of latitude as of altitude. It will thus be seen that the major portion of Central Africa, far from being the "white man's graveyard," is a country of cool plateaus and breeze-swept uplands where the preservation of health offers no insurmountable problems.

But in the steaming lower levels, whose swamps and jungles provide ideal breeding-grounds for mosquitos and tsetse-flies, wholly different con-

ditions exist, though we found government officials, traders, and missionaries who had lived in these miasmatic regions in comparative safety and comfort for many years. Thus, at the Disciples of Christ mission station at Bolenge, just where the Congo crosses the equator, we saw four American families with seven children, all apparently in good health. At another American station on the Lower Congo, in a region notorious for fever and sleeping-sickness, are four missionaries who have served there for an average of forty years. The fathers of one of the great Roman Catholic orders have so successfully eliminated the mosquito and the tsetse-fly from the vicinity of their station at Nouvelle Anvers that they have not only insured their own health but have succeeded in maintaining a large herd of cattle, which are even more susceptible to sleeping-sickness than human beings.

It should not be inferred from this, however, that the lowlands of the Congo are even moderately salubrious, for they are not, though I think it can truthfully be said that so far as Europeans are concerned their unhealthfulness has been exaggerated. Perhaps I had better put it this way:





#### FATHERHOOD

He had probably once been a cannibal, judging from his filed and blackened teeth, but we gathered that he had reformed in order to set his son a good example

a European of average physique has comparatively little to fear from the diseases of the Congo if he will practise moderation in all things, take as much exercise as possible, keep his body clean, wear a helmet in the sun and mosquito-boots in the evening, drink water that has been both boiled and filtered, sleep under a mosquito-net, take quinine either daily or whenever he feels run down, refrain from needless worry, never take a drink until the sun has set and then only imbibe in moderation, and leave the native women alone. He will have his occasional bouts of fever—that goes without saying—but, barring accidents, there is no reason why one should not enjoy tolerably good health even in the low countries if he faithfully follows these regulations.

Whether quinine should be taken as a preventive of fever is one of those controversial questions, like the proper leads in bridge, the best fly for trout, or the most dangerous big game, on which there is a wide divergence of opinion. Before we set out for the Congo, one of the most eminent authorities in the world on tropical medicine, an official of the Rockefeller Foundation, strongly urged us not to take the drug as a preven-

tive, asserting that by so doing its effectiveness in cases of fever was greatly diminished. On the other hand, nearly every European whom we met in the Congo ridiculed this theory, declaring that the only way to escape fever in the tropics is to keep the system toned up with quinine. As it was all very perplexing we decided that each of us should try a different plan. Accordingly Mrs. Powell took five grains of quinine every night at dinner; Barton did not take any; and I took it only when I felt run down. And none of us had even a touch of fever.

But there are certain precautions that the European *must* observe if he wishes to come out of Africa alive. The most important is to treat the sun with profound respect, for it is remorseless toward careless Europeans. The native can go about with uncovered head and the sun lets him pass, but if the white man tries the same thing the sun will promptly kill him. Once, on the coast of Mozambique, I saw an Englishman stand on the end of a wharf waving his topee in farewell to some friends on a departing steamer. He was uncovered for perhaps three minutes. He was buried the same evening. An American woman



whom I knew in Africa insisted on wearing to a polo-game an ordinary hat instead of a helmet, declaring that the latter was as unnecessary as it was unbecoming. She didn't die; she wasn't even ill; but the sun took its revenge all the same, for almost overnight her disposition underwent a startling transformation, the smiling cheerfulness which had always characterized her giving place to irritability, selfishness, and suspicion.

Unless you are absolutely certain of the purity of your drinking-water—and in Africa you can never be certain of anything—you should have it both boiled and filtered. At the larger posts in the Congo it is usually possible to buy European bottled waters, but the traveler who is wise will take the precaution of scrutinizing the caps in order to make certain that the bottles have not been refilled from local sources. It should also be kept in mind that it is just as dangerous to eat uncooked vegetables that have been washed in impure water as to drink the water itself. In such a country as the Congo green salads are always a temptation, but we never touched them unless we were dining in a private house, when our hostess would invariably announce that the salad was

quite safe to eat as she had washed the lettuce and tomatoes with her own hands.

Travelers in Central Africa should always carry their own mosquito-nets with them, for, though the beds in some of the rest-houses and most of the hotels are provided with nets, the native servants are careless about airing them, and myriads of hungry mosquitos find refuge in their folds. Nets are not provided in the river-steamers, and we should have been eaten alive had we not brought our own. Both health and comfort make mosquito-boots imperative in the evenings, particularly in the lowlands; but they must be brought from Europe, as the demand for them is always greatly in excess of the local supply. They are usually made of brown ooze leather with supple soles and soft legs that extend half-way up the calf, but for formal evening wear they are often of white canvas or buckskin.

This impressive list of precautions may lead some of my readers to believe that in going to Equatorial Africa one is taking his life in his hands. Yet such is not the case. An American mining engineer whom I met on the upper river summed it all up when he said:



*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

A SPRING IN THE FOREST

The natives drink any water, no matter what its source, and survive, but the European who drinks unboiled water in Africa is flirting with death



“If you don’t wear a helmet you will probably be killed by the sun. If you are careless about your drinking-water you stand an excellent chance of getting typhoid. If you expose yourself to tsetse-flies you are quite likely to die of sleeping-sickness. You must be careful about your food if you are to avoid dysentery. To escape liver trouble you must take regular exercise. If you are to keep reasonably free from fever you must guard against being bitten by mosquitos and take daily doses of quinine. You must wear stout boots while walking in the grass and bathe your feet several times a day if you do not court trouble from jiggers and hook-worms. You can minimize the risk of incurring bubonic plague by looking out for fleas, and of cholera by wearing an abdominal band. Keep away from crowds of natives if you would avoid exposing yourself to leprosy and beriberi. Don’t invite trouble by wandering about at night by yourself. And if you do not want to come down with venereal diseases you must leave the native girls alone. Disregard these rules, and you will probably be planted in a weed-grown cemetery. Observe them faithfully, and you can be as healthy in the Congo

as in Chicago. In fact, you will probably live longer, for out here we have no motor-car accidents and no gunmen."

But all other problems in the Congo, political, industrial, and hygienic, are completely overshadowed by the menace offered to the colony's twelve million black inhabitants by one of the most deadly, devastating, and mysterious diseases known to man. I refer, of course, to sleeping-sickness.

"But," some one may object, "are not deaths from sleeping-sickness comparatively rare? And are not the natives reasonably immune to it?"

To which I would reply that, though the Congo had an estimated population of something more than thirty millions in Stanley's time, the natives have dwindled in half a century to not much more than a third of that number, so dreadful has been the toll that the disease has taken. Though we hear much of typhus in Russia and of cholera in China, is it fully realized, I wonder, that the Congo Government has been compelled to order the evacuation of territories as large as some of our New England States in order to save their populations from total extinction?

Sleeping-sickness, so-called, is the term popularly applied to the final stages of trypanosoma infection, or, to give it its scientific name, trypanosomiasis. Trypanosomes are organisms that inhabit the blood of many vertebrates—fishes, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Though the disease has been known in Africa for a century, it was not until quite recently that it was discovered that the infection was transmitted by one of the numerous species of tsetse-fly, the *Glossina palpalis*. Nor is there even now any certainty that it is not transmitted by other species of the tsetse, or, quite possibly, by the *stegomyia* mosquito.

The disease claims its victims from both sexes and all ages. Nor does it confine itself to human beings, having wiped out domestic live stock over the greater portion of Central Africa. In human beings the first symptom is usually a fever that lasts for a few days and recurs after a short interval. This is followed by a swelling of the cervical and other glands and in many cases by eruptions of the skin. The later stages of trypanosomiasis—those which constitute the condition commonly referred to as sleeping-sickness—probably indicate the beginning of the infection of the vic-

tim's nervous system. There may be an interval of years—as many as seven, it is said—between the primary infection and the beginning of the sleeping-sickness symptoms, but in the majority of cases the period is much shorter. The duration of the sleeping-sickness stage ranges from three or four months to as many years. In the latter cases there are often prolonged intervals during which the victim appears to have regained his normal health, but sooner or later there comes a relapse, and in every case, whether chronic or acute, it is terminated by death. The approach of the final symptoms is indicated by a physical languor, a lack-luster expression, dull headaches, a puffiness and drooping of the eyelids, a twitching of the muscles, and a tendency to lapse into sleep. Soon the patient begins to loose flesh rapidly, terrible convulsions are succeeded by temporary local paralysis, weakness steadily increases, and the end usually comes with a state of coma.

It is possible—but there is no definite knowledge on this point—that cures may be effected in the very early stages of trypanosomiasis, but once the disease has reached the sleeping-sickness stage it is believed to be invariably fatal. Numer-





THE MEDICINE-MAN

Picture a tall and muscular negro with a smile that would frighten a bulldog. Inconceivably hideous and grotesque, he looked like the creature of a nightmare, the phantasm of a disordered brain



ous methods have been advocated for the treatment of sleeping-sickness, but it is impossible to speak very optimistically about any of them so far as they give promise of effecting a permanent cure, though recent experiments tend to prove that the disease can be temporarily checked by the use of atoxyl, a potent arsenical compound. In its frantic search for a cure the world of science has thus far been completely baffled, and until one is found the mortality of the disease must be reckoned at 100 per cent.

The tsetse-fly, which is found only in Africa, has ten species. In color they are a dark gray or grayish brown, one third to one half of an inch long, though the proboscis which projects horizontally from the front of the head makes them appear somewhat longer. When the fly is at rest the wings overlap each other, crossing like the blades of a pair of scissors. The *Glossina palpalis* variety has been found throughout Central Africa, from Senegal south to Angola, from the Atlantic eastward through the Congo to Tanganyika Territory and Victoria Nyanza, from Rhodesia northward to the Uganda-Sudan frontier. The flies are seldom if ever found above four thousand feet, so

that the highlands of Kenya Colony, Ruanda-Urundi, and the Katanga are immune from their ravages. Though always found near water, they are, unlike mosquitos, not fond of swamps and marshes, their usual habitat being the shores of lakes or the banks of rivers where trees or bushes overhang a beach of mud or sand, this fact having given rise to the conjecture that the trypanosomes which they carry are produced by crocodiles. The tsetse are blood-suckers and feed during the day, but, by reason of their rapid flight and the softness with which they alight, the victim usually remains unaware of their presence until his flesh is punctured by something which feels like a red-hot needle.<sup>1</sup>

In view of the well-known habits of the tsetse, several measures suggest themselves for its eradication or control, any or all of which, however, are extremely difficult to put into execution in a country so vast and wild as the Congo. The fly lives near water, but since it is obviously impossible to move lakes and rivers, the only alternative is to move the villages built upon their banks to healthier locations. In some cases this has been

<sup>1</sup> "From Ruwenzori to the Congo," by A. F. B. Wollaston.

done. The fly likewise requires rank vegetation. The banks of all the lakes and rivers in the Congo cannot, of course, be stripped of jungle, but considerable spaces can be cleared in the immediate vicinity of towns, a measure which has met with gratifying success wherever it has been tried. The death-rate would be enormously decreased if the waterways where the fly is known to exist could be avoided, but this is manifestly impracticable as the natives are compelled to rely on these waterways for their livelihood, for transportation and fishing. In theory it would be an excellent plan to evacuate the inhabitants of infected areas into healthful districts; but, though this has been done in several instances, it is clearly impossible to do it on a large scale, for populations cannot be moved about like herds of cattle. If natives from infected districts could be prevented from entering territories which have been immune from sleeping-sickness, the disease could be localized in a comparatively few sections, where its virulence would eventually diminish, but in such a country as the Congo there are insuperable difficulties in the way of establishing anything in the nature of a wide-spread and effec-

tive quarantine. The best that can be done under the circumstances, therefore, is to clear the banks of lakes and streams in the immediate vicinity of villages, thereby destroying those breeding-grounds of the tsetse where it is most likely to infect human beings; to close villages and districts that are infected; and, in extreme cases, to move the populations elsewhere. This the Belgian Government is doing so far as its limited financial resources will permit, but it must be remembered that it is one thing for the United States to eradicate disease from two little countries like Panama and Cuba; it is quite another for Belgium to adopt such measures over a territory as vast as the Congo. Efforts are now being made, however, to enlist the aid of the International Red Cross and the great health foundations of the world in the sleeping-sickness campaign.<sup>2</sup>

The task of the Government is made vastly more difficult, moreover, by the attitude of the natives themselves, who are sunk in ignorance and superstition. When a native falls sick, instead of applying for treatment to the nearest medical

<sup>2</sup>See "From Ruwenzori to the Congo," by A. F. R. Wollaston, and "Education in Africa," the report of the Phelps Stokes Fund mission.

missionary or government physician, he calls in the local witch-doctor, a painted and befeathered charlatan. Though the witch-doctors kill more patients than they cure, it is said that 90 per cent of the natives acknowledge their powers and fear them, so that their influence for evil is enormous. For years past the missionaries have endeavored to persuade the natives to accept medical aid as a first step in civilizing the country by breaking the grip of the medicine-men, but in matters of health, as in their domestic affairs, the natives are suspicious of Europeans.

The Government is now taking steps to enter into competition with the witch-doctors, however, by establishing, throughout the country, hospitals for the treatment of native patients and schools for the training of native medical assistants. The object of this training is to teach the pupils the use of the microscope in such important diseases as sleeping-sickness, malaria, and hook-worm, and the methods used in their treatment. It is assumed that the natives will accept treatment from a trained member of their own race which they would not accept from a European and that in course of time they will come to recognize that

the witch-doctor's herbs and incantations are less effective than the white man's medicine, thereby weakening the pernicious influence of the witch-doctors and very greatly improving the health conditions among the native population.

Of all the problems that confront the white man in Central Africa to-day, the prevention of disease among the natives is by far the most serious and pressing. And, so far as the conquest of sleeping-sickness is concerned, the outlook is not bright. The dread malady, as pitiless as it is mysterious, hovers like a death-cloud above middle Africa. Unless it is dispelled the regions which it shadows will be called, not the White Man's Graveyard, but the Black Man's Cemetery.



## CHAPTER XIV

### LABORERS OF THE LORD

IT has often seemed to me that no class of public servant—I use the term in its broader sense—has been so persistently maligned and is so generally misunderstood as the missionary. He has been showered with abuse by slave-traders, opium-smugglers, rum-runners, brutal employers, tyrannical officials. By novelists, dramatists, cartoonists, and screen writers he has been held up to ridicule as a smug, sanctimonious, psalm-singing, now-let-us-pray-dear-brethren individual with a Bible in his hand and an umbrella under his arm. He is usually depicted in books and plays as either a hypocrite or a fanatic, who spends his life striving to convert heathen who do not wish to be converted; who regards smoking, card-playing, and dancing as inventions of the devil; and who is a constant source of irritation and trouble both to his own government and to that of the country in which he is stationed. In Asiatic Turkey, where

I lived for several years, one frequently heard the remark, "First the consul, then the missionary, then the gunboat." Yet, though maligned, misunderstood, miserably underpaid, lonely, frequently facing death from disease or hostile natives, he has pursued the tasks assigned him with a courage and devotion which merits the admiration of every right-thinking man and woman, the gratitude of every government having colonial possessions.

Except in so far as I hold that every man is entitled to a square deal, I hold no brief for the missionary. Personally, I do not approve of all forms of missionary effort, nor do I think that all missionaries are temperamentally fitted for their work, any more than I believe that all army officers are good soldiers or that all ambassadors are good diplomats. But I have known missionaries and have observed the results of their labors in every great field of evangelistic endeavor from Persia to Polynesia, from the Congo to the China seas, and it irritates and angers me to hear them and their work sweepingly condemned by persons who are speaking from malice, prejudice, or ignorance.





*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

#### CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONGO

Girls from the Baptist mission station at Yakusu, tattooed from necks to knees and with "nothing much before and rather less than 'arf o' that be'ind"

To those of us who have formed our estimates of the missionary at first hand, in the Dark Places, the caricatures of him which are presented to the public in the comic papers or on the stage are screamingly funny—but not in the way their authors intend. Far from being meek and submissive, as he has been painted, the average missionary is a hard-as-nails, two-fisted, he-man, who, if smitten on one cheek, instead of turning the other also, will promptly stretch the smiter flat with a right hook to the point of the chin. Central Africa is no place for moral suasion. I know one missionary, a Roman Catholic priest well advanced in years, who was aboard a Congo river-steamer that was tied up at a wood-post when an affray began between rival bands of natives. The blacks were in an ugly mood, and in an instant there developed a situation fraught with peril to the white passengers. But it was not the captain who saved the situation, or one of the Belgian officials. It was my friend the missionary. Regardless of the threatening knives and flying spears, he sprang ashore, forced his way into the seething, savage throng, caught the ringleader by the throat, and by his vigorous language brought

the natives to their senses and averted a situation that threatened to end in bloodshed.

Save in his devotion to duty, the missionary of to-day has little in common with those early zealots who carried the gospel into the earth's dark places because they felt "the call." He must be as well fitted for his chosen work as an army officer or an engineer or a consul, for the great missionary organizations in Europe and America long ago came to the realization that an untrained man, no matter how sincere and zealous, was likely to accomplish far more harm than good. As, particularly in Central Africa, the missionary is often stationed at some remote outpost in the bush, hundreds of miles beyond even the fringes of civilization, he must combine the versatility of a jack of all trades with the resourcefulness of a Robinson Crusoe. He must be, as it were, self-contained; an administrator, a teacher, a preacher, a doctor, an architect, a carpenter, a farmer, an engineer, and a practical business man in one. In the Congo he must speak French and at least one of the native tongues. He must be tactful and diplomatic, for he is frequently called upon to adjust disputes between the natives and the white

settlers, and he must retain the confidence and friendship of both if his usefulness is to continue. And for all these qualities, the possession of which would insure him success in almost any field of endeavor, he rarely receives more than a hundred dollars a month and is usually permitted to go home only once in four years. Can as much be said of those pursuing any other calling?

Most people seem to be under the impression that the duties of a missionary are mainly of an evangelistic nature. Such is not the case. Actuating all missionary effort, of course, is the desire to propagate religion, just as the ultimate aim of all missionaries is to effect conversions, but it has long since been realized that this goal must be approached by gradual stages. Hence, though a certain amount of evangelistic work is carried on by every mission, the average missionary devotes far more time to improving the physical, moral, and mental condition of the native than to his spiritual salvation. The late Dr. Howard Bliss, for many years president of the American University at Beirut, in Syria, summed it all up in a remark he once made to me: "Let me have the training of the minds and bodies of these young

men and their souls will take care of themselves.”

The immediate object of all missionary effort in the Congo, therefore, is to raise the native's standard of health and to improve his mind; for heathenism, it is argued, is the result of ignorance, and the only substitute for ignorance is education. But the task of supplying any kind of education to twelve million primitive and, in many instances, barbarous people, scattered over a territory of nearly a million square miles, presents enormous difficulties. How formidable these difficulties are will be more clearly realized when it is remembered that the population of the Congo is about equal to the negro population scattered over our sixteen Southern States, but whereas in the South the whites outnumber the negroes two to one, in the Congo there are at least fifteen hundred blacks to every white man.

In comparison with its needs, the present educational facilities of the Congo are almost negligible. According to the latest figures available, there are in the colony approximately 2,200,000 children of school age, of whom less than 200,000 are in school. And of these last, less than 2000 are in







#### MORE WORK FOR THE MISSIONARY

There are about twelve million such people in the Belgian Congo, savage, cruel, ignorant, indolent, sunk in superstition. Until some method can be devised for inducing them to work the labor problem of Central Africa will remain an acute one

schools run by the Government. And all of the teachers in all of the schools, government and private alike, are missionaries, Roman Catholic or Protestant.

Though no one can travel in the Congo without realizing the immense difficulties involved in providing adequate educational facilities for so vast a colony and its millions of primitive inhabitants, I must confess that it startled me to learn that the sum total of the Government's activities in this direction consisted of eight official schools with about 1600 pupils. In other words, the Belgian Congo, with an area one third that of the United States, has a school system greatly inferior to that which would be found in a small American city. Such conditions lead one to wonder if, in assuming responsibility for the Congo, Belgium did not undertake a greater task than she is capable of seeing through.

Barring these eight official schools, which are staffed by the brothers of a Belgian teaching order, all the educational institutions in the colony are supported and operated by various missionary societies, Protestant and Roman Catholic. Such of the schools as are under the direct supervision

of Europeans are in nearly all cases well run, with substantial buildings and curricula adapted to the needs of the pupils. But the out-station schools, far in the bush and in charge of native teachers, are primitive and crude beyond anything ever conceived of by an American or European educator.

There are about 1150 missionaries in the Congo, according to the last available report, of whom about 650 are Roman Catholics and 500 Protestants. The Catholic missionaries comprise Jesuits, Trappists, Dominicans, Capuchins, Benedictines, Redemptionists, the Priests of Mill Hill, the Priests of the Sacred Heart, the Prémontrés Fathers, the Holy Ghost Fathers, and, most famous of all, the White Fathers, as well as the brothers of the Scheut and Marais orders, the two last-named being Belgian organizations. There are also the Catholic sisterhoods: the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, the Sisters of Charity, the Trappist Sisters, the Sisters of Our Lady of Notre Dame, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary, the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood, the Sisters of Mons, the White Sisters, the Canonesses of St. Augustine, and the Daughters of the Cross.

Of the numerous schools operated by these great

orders, first place must be given to the Jesuit School for Boys at Kisantu, in the Lower Congo, on the railway between Kinshasa and Matadi. Here, in the heart of a region long notorious for sleeping-sickness, the Jesuit fathers and brothers have succeeded in eliminating the tsetse-fly sufficiently to develop a stock-farm with eighteen hundred head of cattle, a few horses, and some other animals. The first step in this remarkable achievement was the clearing away of the dense undergrowth in which the tsetse breeds and planting in its stead the straight-growing eucalyptus-tree. The second step was the elimination of infected persons and animals from the large area under the control of the school. The third step was to develop a breed that would thrive in such a climate and would be able to resist sporadic attacks of the tsetse-fly. This was done by selecting acclimated native cattle and crossing them with animals from Brittany and Flanders. In addition to the school's extensive experiments in cattle-breeding, one of the brothers has developed a remarkable garden, where, within five degrees of the equator, he grows many of the vegetables, fruits, and flowers of the temperate zone. That

such an establishment—maintained and conducted by missionaries, remember—is of immense educational and economic value, not only to the community but to the whole colony, goes without saying.

Close by this institution, of which it is really a part, is the Kisantu School for Girls, under the direction of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Here about two hundred native girls receive a variety of instruction, including elementary school work under good teachers, training in home activities, gardening, and the care of animals, including the operation of a dairy and the making of butter. Special emphasis is placed on the care of infants and child hygiene generally, and mothers are encouraged to bring their babies to the baby clinic which the school maintains.

At Kindu, on the Lualaba, is a unique institution maintained by the Fathers of the Holy Ghost and the Daughters of the Cross for children of native women and white fathers. It is the only institution in the Congo devoted to children of mixed parentage and reflects the policy of the government officials and some Roman Catholic authorities to separate the mulatto children from



ONLY A POOR WORKING-GIRL

But she doesn't worry about the clothes question





those who are purely native. Though the equipment is very crude, the services that are being rendered by the school are of great value.

By far the greatest number of natives are being reached educationally, however, by the out-station schools maintained by the White Fathers in the Eastern Congo. This system, which has proved highly effective, consists of a central mission, where the priests have their headquarters, and "chapel schools" at as many places within the mission territory as can be effectively supervised. These schools are generally established in the most thickly populated districts, though the building is usually a short distance from the largest village so as to be independent of the community and its customs. Each out-station is in charge of two native catechists; the plant sometimes covers two or more acres, with residences for the catechists and their families, a house for visiting missionaries, some cattle, chickens, ducks, and fruit-trees, and a garden to supply food and to serve as an object-lesson to the neighborhood. The instruction, which is of necessity rudimentary, includes religion, reading and writing in the native language, elementary arithmetic, gar-

dening, and the raising of animals. The children attend the school, without compulsion or persuasion, except during harvest-time, when they are permitted to assist their parents. The catechists hold classes once or twice a week in each of the important villages within a twelve-mile radius of the chapel school, not only giving instruction to the children but endeavoring to interest the adults. The catechist makes a weekly report to the central mission, and once a fortnight the school and its region is inspected by a White Father. These out-station schools are admirably adapted to the simple needs of the people, the cost of their maintenance is comparatively small, and the inhabitants will often accept and confide in a teacher who is of their own race more readily than they will a European. It would seem, therefore, that in the extension throughout the colony of this system, carefully supervised by Europeans, is to be found the answer to the Congo's educational problem.

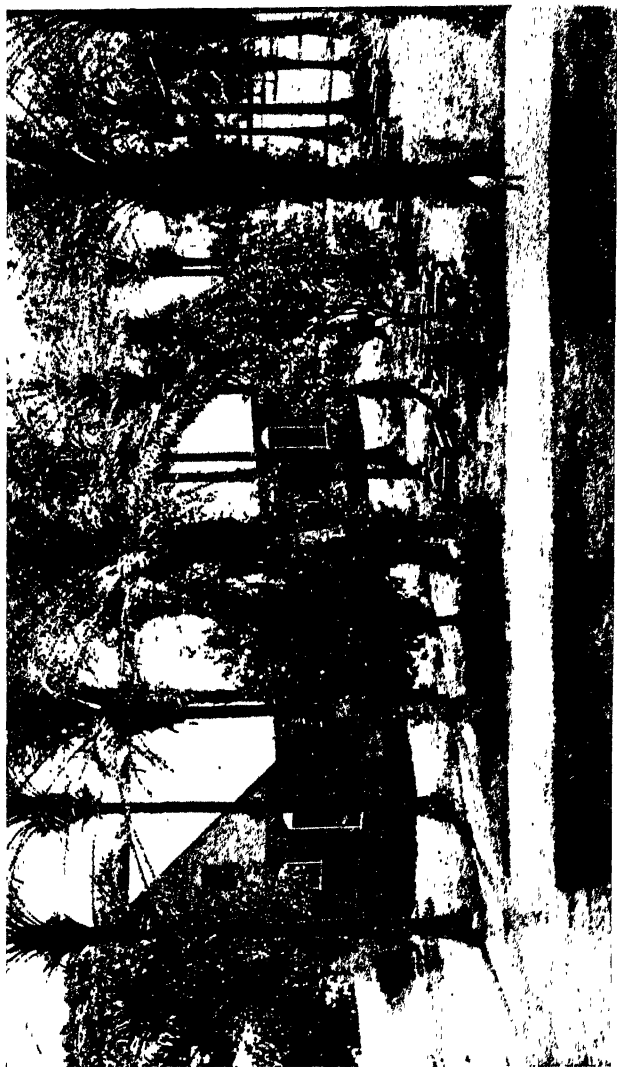
Protestant activities in the Congo are carried on by more than five hundred missionaries representing some twenty mission societies, American, British, Swedish, and Belgian. The American

missions represent numerous denominations, including the Baptists, the Northern and Southern Methodists, the Southern Presbyterians, the Disciples of Christ, the Mennonites, the Seventh-Day Adventists, and the Christian Alliance. One American mission station dates back to 1878, while numerous others were established in the early eighties. Despite the trying climate, several of the early workers are still in the field, their services going back to Stanley's time.

The heroic devotion to duty of these Protestant missionaries is strikingly illustrated by the itinerant duties performed by the two families who form the staff of the Baptist station at Yakusu, on the Congo near Stanleyville. The chief work of the central mission is to train teachers and evangelists for the 367 outposts scattered throughout the Big Bend region. From January to March and from July to September, one missionary and his wife are constantly traveling up and down the Congo and its branches on the mission steamer *Grenfell*, trekking inland wherever necessary, in order to visit these 367 schools, examine the ten thousand children who attend them, and give encouragement to the native teachers. To them

sleeping-sickness, snakes, crocodiles, and cannibals are commonplaces, as much matters of course as measles, mosquitos, watch-dogs, and traffic cops are to a county school superintendent at home.

The most interesting American mission I saw in the Congo was the station at Bolenge conducted by the Disciples of Christ. Bolenge is situated at the point where the Congo intersects the equator, so that in pursuance of his daily routine a missionary may be in the northern hemisphere one moment and the next moment in the southern. Mrs. Powell and Barton insist that I am prejudiced in favor of Bolenge because we there sat down to the best meal we had in Africa. But what really aroused my interest and admiration was the amazing variety of activities in which the four Americans and their wives who comprise the staff were engaged and in all of which they displayed marked competency. To begin with, they had themselves designed and built the plant, which consists of four residences, a church, a hospital, a school, a girls' dormitory, and a large, well-planned industrial building. In addition to conducting the large main school for boys and girls of all ages and 122 outpost schools scattered



AMERICA IN THE CONGO

The mission church at Bolenge, actually on the equator, where eight Americans are carrying on as many activities as the Swiss Family Robinson over a region as large as many a European kingdom



over a territory larger than many a European kingdom, these eight Americans operate a saw-mill, a wood-working shop, a blacksmith shop, a shipyard where they repair and even build small river steamers and launches, a brick-kiln which provided all the bricks used in the construction of the large industrial building, a printing-plant where a weekly newspaper and numerous textbooks are printed, a hospital, a dispensary, an up-to-date experimental farm, a dairy, a citrus-orchard, and a large vegetable-garden. Where in the United States could you find four families capable of carrying on so great a number of varied activities, and carrying them on efficiently, aided only by negroes not long emerged from savagery? The only parallel that I can recall is the story of the Swiss Family Robinson.<sup>1</sup>

The fact should not be overlooked that the Protestant missionaries are carrying on their work in the Congo as foreign residents under the protection of a Catholic state and that this places upon the missionaries a special obligation to inculcate and maintain among the natives the utmost loyalty

<sup>1</sup> See "Education in Africa," the report of the Phelps Stokes Fund mission.

to that Government. In view of this, and of the large number of Catholic missions in the Congo, many of which receive subsidies from the state, it would seem that, with the best of good will existing on both sides, there must be a certain amount of friction between the Protestant mission workers and the Catholic officials. Yet, remarkable as it may seem, such has not been the case. There were times, under the Free State régime, when the missionaries were obliged to protest against cruelty and injustice. To-day those protests are recalled by the Belgians with approval, as the criticisms of real friends. The Belgian flag is loyally hung in every Protestant school, and there is every evidence of sincere coöperation between the colonial administration and the missions. An even more encouraging omen for the future, however, is the mutual confidence and friendliness which characterizes the relations between the Roman Catholic missionaries and their Protestant fellow-workers. During my stay in the Congo I talked to scores of missionaries representing the two great divisions of the Christian faith, and I cannot recall having once heard the members of one display antagonism or voice criticism for the



other. As much cannot be said of the relations between the two in many civilized communities, more 's the pity.

Though from the numerous officials of the state with whom I discussed colonial affairs I heard no criticism of the Protestant missionaries, I did hear frequent complaints regarding the tendency of the Mompères, as the Roman Catholic mission workers are commonly termed, to interfere in government affairs.

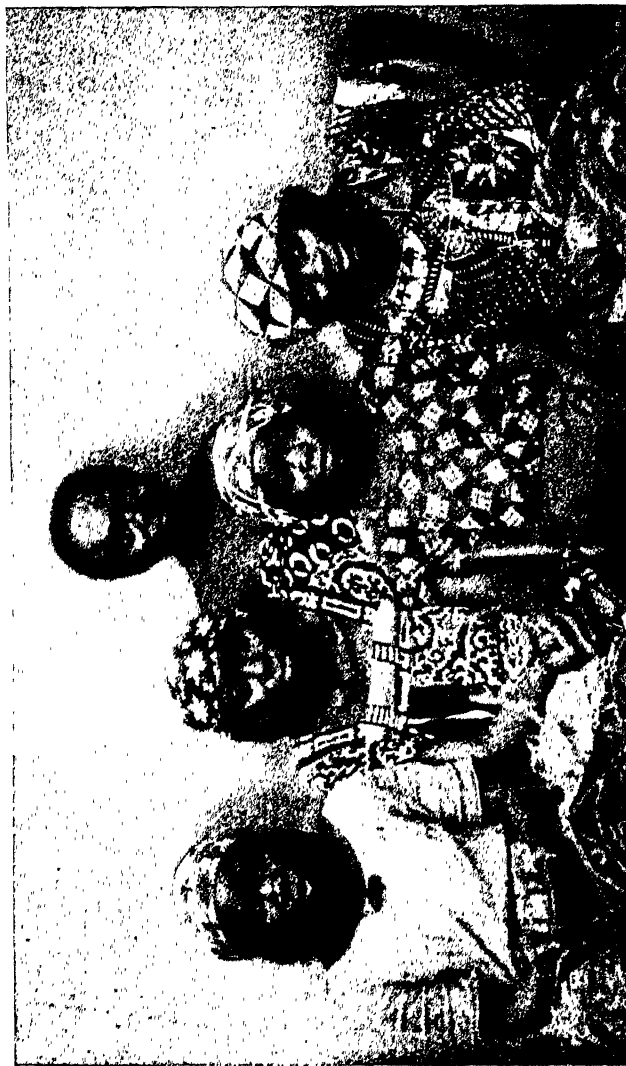
Now, Belgium is a Catholic country, and the relations between state and church are much closer than is the case in France. Moreover, the Clerical party is very strong and, even when not in power, is distinctly a force to be reckoned with. Perhaps it is not surprising, therefore, that the representatives in the Congo of the powerful religious orders should not only bring their views on questions of administrative policies directly to the attention of the home Government, but that, thanks to their enormous political influence in Belgium, they frequently are successful in having their views adopted, even when they are bitterly opposed by the officials in the colony itself. I well remember that when word was received from Brussels that

M. Carton, a prominent Clerical, had been appointed minister of the colonies to succeed M. Franck, a Socialist, it was asserted quite openly at official dinner-tables that the power of the priesthood in the Congo would be enormously increased by the change.

Though the officials with whom I discussed the question were naturally cautious in expressing their views on so delicate a subject to me, a foreigner, they did not appear, as a whole, to be overfond of the priests, whose interference in governmental affairs they bitterly resented. And they confirmed what I had heard before, that some, at least, of the religious orders keep secret *dossiers* relating to colonial officials, that their reports are listened to and frequently acted upon by the home Government, and that an official's chances of promotion often depend on the good will of the church.

Be this as it may—and it is, after all, a matter which concerns only the Belgians themselves—I found the Catholic missionaries whom I met to be, almost without exception, sincere, earnest, enthusiastic, hard-working men and women, genuinely interested in the betterment of conditions





FEMININE FASHIONS IN EQUATORIA

The more shrieking the designs of the cotton garments the more chic the wearers

in the colony, and having a deep understanding and genuine sympathy for the native population. Some of them, of course, are greatly superior as a class to others. Thus, the members of the great international orders, such as the Jesuits and the Benedictines, as well as those of a newer organization, the Priests of Mill Hill, are generally men of education and refinement, with the high standard of efficiency one expects from those bodies. The same cannot always be said, however, of the mission workers sent out by some of the Belgian societies, for, though sincere and zealous, they have seldom undergone the long course of training for colonial service required by the international orders and hence are not always properly fitted for the work.

During my homeward journey I came to be on terms of such intimacy with the father superior of one of the more important orders that I was finally emboldened to ask him if there was any foundation for the stories I had heard of the confidential reports kept by Catholic missionaries on officials of the colonial administration.

"Of course we keep tabs on them," he admitted readily. "Why should n't we? If a priest has

indisputable evidence that an official of the state is grossly misconducting himself, if his policies are cruel or oppressive, in short, if he is a menace to the well-being of the community, it is the duty of that priest to submit a report on the offending official to the head of his mission, who, in turn, transmits it to the head of the order in Europe. If the latter considers that action should be taken, he goes direct to the minister of the colonies, who is responsible to the Government and the nation for conditions in the Congo. The charge is then carefully investigated and, if it is proved, the objectionable official is warned, transferred to another post, or dismissed. If that is disloyalty, let them make the most of it. Our obligation is to God and Government, not to government functionaries."

And I, for one, think that he is perfectly right.

It was always interesting, and frequently instructive, to hear the views voiced by non-official Europeans—mining men, traders, and engineers, British and American—when the subject of missions was mentioned. Most of these men had spent many years in Africa, some of them were distinctly hard-boiled, and on the proper way to

treat the native all of them held strong opinions.

“Your Protestant missionary,” an English business man remarked to me during one of these discussions, “treats the native as ‘a friend and a brother.’ When he catches a native in a lie or a theft or other misbehavior he reproves him and urges him not to sin again. But your Catholic missionary takes the ‘child of God’ out into the compound and administers the only kind of reproof that the native understands, a damn good hiding.”

## CHAPTER XV

### FOLLOWING THE LINE

**B**ELOW Ponthierville the river again becomes unnavigable because of another long series of cataracts and rapids which culminate, at the point where the Lualaba joins the Congo proper, in the famous Stanley Falls. So once again we perforce turned to the railway, a meter-gage affair, eighty miles long. The journey is uncomfortable and uninteresting, for the toy carriages are rickety and overcrowded; first-class passengers who neglect to bring their own chairs along frequently have to sit on the floor; and the line runs through a monotonous forest region broken only by occasional sawmills or small plantations, at some of which, I noted, experiments were being made in cotton-growing. After eight hours of constant jolting, suffocating dust, and clouds of sparks and cinders from the wood-burning engine, we were set down on the bank of the Congo opposite Stanleyville, capital of the Equatorial





*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

STANLEY FALLS

Stretching right across the broad expanse of tumbling, angry waters is a barrier of rude wooden scaffoldings which support the elaborate system of traps and weirs in which hundreds of tons of fish are caught by the natives



Province and one of the most attractive towns in Central Africa.

Considering its position in the heart of a vast, low-lying basin, within half a degree of the line, the climate of Stanleyville, even in late April, was astonishingly fresh and cool. At least it seemed fresh and cool to us, straight from the steaming jungles of the Lualaba, though I do not think that the thermometer dropped below ninety, day or night, while we were there. The residents complain, however, of excessive dampness, because of the town's proximity to Stanley Falls, only a mile away, from which arises continually a great cloud of spray.

I had always pictured the Stanley Falls as comparable to those of the Zambesi and Niagara, but they proved very disappointing, the Lualaba, after boiling along for threescore miles through a rocky gorge, pouring into the Congo proper over a drop of only six feet. At this point the river is somewhat wider than the Thames at London Bridge, and the volume of water is about a quarter of that which pours through Stanley Pool, a thousand miles further down. An interesting sight at the falls is a barrier of rude wooden scaf-

foldings which stretches right across the broad expanse of tumbling, angry waters. These support the elaborate system of traps and weirs in which the natives catch hundreds of tons of fish, many of them as large as salmon. But scenically the falls are wholly lacking in majesty and grandeur. A vastly more impressive sight is afforded by the great Tchopo Falls, a short distance to the west of the town, where two rivers, the Tchopo and the Lindi, meet at the brink of a lofty precipice, over which they plunge in a smother of spray to greet the Congo with a roar that can be heard miles away.

Stanleyville, which stands on the north bank of the Congo, is a charmingly situated and admirably kept town, its wide, clean streets lined by double rows of mangos and oil-palms, so that the pedestrian is always shaded from the sun. There is a rather imposing palace, the residence of the provincial governor, with white walls and deep verandas and sentries marching up and down before its gate; attractive bungalows peer out at the passer-by from vivid, fragrant gardens; now and then one glimpses that rare thing in Africa, a stretch of well-tended, bright-green lawn; and

extending for half a mile along the river-bank is a row of trading-establishments, some of them quite pretentious, where one can obtain many of the luxuries of civilization.

There is a great mixture of tribes in Stanleyville, as might be expected in so important a political and commercial center, and on the streets one constantly sees strange peoples, from the far interior, come in to lay their troubles before the governor, to purchase trade-goods, or to dispose of tusks; for Stanleyville is one of the greatest ivory-markets in all Africa. Most of the manual labor is performed by Badokos, but the Arabisés, refreshingly clean and trim in their red tarbooshes and white *kansas*, are much in evidence, for this was an important center for the Arab slave-traders, the historic scene of the operations of the most notorious of them all, Tippoo Tib. As in all the larger towns of the Congo, the natives have their own suburban villages and are not permitted to live in the European quarter, which they may enter after nightfall only when provided with a police-pass and carrying a lighted lantern.

Seated on the electric-lighted terrace of the Hôtel des Chutes, with white-clad, silent-footed

waiters serving the thirsty patrons with vast quantities of iced beer—for in Stanleyville we found the first ice we had seen since leaving Dar-es-Salaam; with the raucous strains of a gramophone, playing American jazz, rising above the clamor in the bar; with women in dainty muslins seated at the tables; and with American motor-cars honk-honking impatiently as they sped along the river drive, I wondered if Stanley, when he first set foot in Kinsangani, the westernmost outpost of Arab power, forty-odd years before, could have envisioned, even in his wildest dreams, the town that bears his name. Yet stranger transformations have taken place in Central Africa in that brief span of time. For the very cannibals who hurled clouds of arrows against Stanley's canoes are to-day, some of them at least, firemen and engineers on the river steamboats, perspiring over their engines with lumps of waste in their strong black hands.

Stanleyville is the gateway to what gives promise of becoming an important mining region, for from it starts the motor-road which leads to Kilo and Moto, two small villages in the vicinity of Lake Albert, near which are the most productive gold-mines in the colony. At present four mines



*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

THE TCHOPO FALLS

A short distance below Stanleyville the Tchopo and the Lindi meet at the brink of a lofty precipice over which they leap in a smother of spray to greet the Congo





are being worked, two by the Government and two by private interests. Shortly before our arrival something of a furor was created in mining circles by the discovery in the state mine at Kilo of a gold nugget weighing twelve pounds. In order to open up the northeastern Congo, plans are now being made to build a railway from Stanleyville to the Sudan frontier.

It is something more than a thousand miles from Stanleyville to Kinshasa, on Stanley Pool, and the down journey occupies anywhere from eight to sixteen days, according to the height of the water and the speed of the steamer. We made the trip in a little more than nine days, for by great good fortune we found at Stanleyville the best and largest of the Sonatra Company's steamers, the *Tabora*, a great stern-wheeler, nearly three hundred feet long, which, with its tiers of decks, its twin funnels, and its lofty texas, bore a striking resemblance to the Mississippi River steamboats of a generation ago. In fact, the sister-ship of the *Tabora*, the *Kigoma*, is of American construction, having been built in Pittsburg for the Orinoco trade and brought out to the Congo in sections.

I had had the foresight to telegraph from Dar-

es-Salaam engaging passage from Stanleyville to Kinshasa—or, as they say in the Congo, from “the Falls” to “Kin”—and it was well that I did so. Otherwise we might have been compelled to wait in Stanleyville for weeks, for in the spring the river-boats to Kinshasa and the steamers from Matadi to Antwerp are always packed with Europeans going home on leave. As the *Compagnie Maritime du Congo Belge*, which operates the liners between Matadi and Antwerp, is subsidized by the Belgian Government, officials returning to Europe are required to travel via Matadi if they wish to avail themselves of the reduced rates to which they are entitled as government employees. This works a serious hardship, however, on those stationed near Lake Tanganyika or in the Katanga, for the former could go out via Dar-es-Salaam, and the latter via Cape Town or Beira, more expeditiously and comfortably than by the long, hot, and fatiguing route down the Lualaba and the Congo.

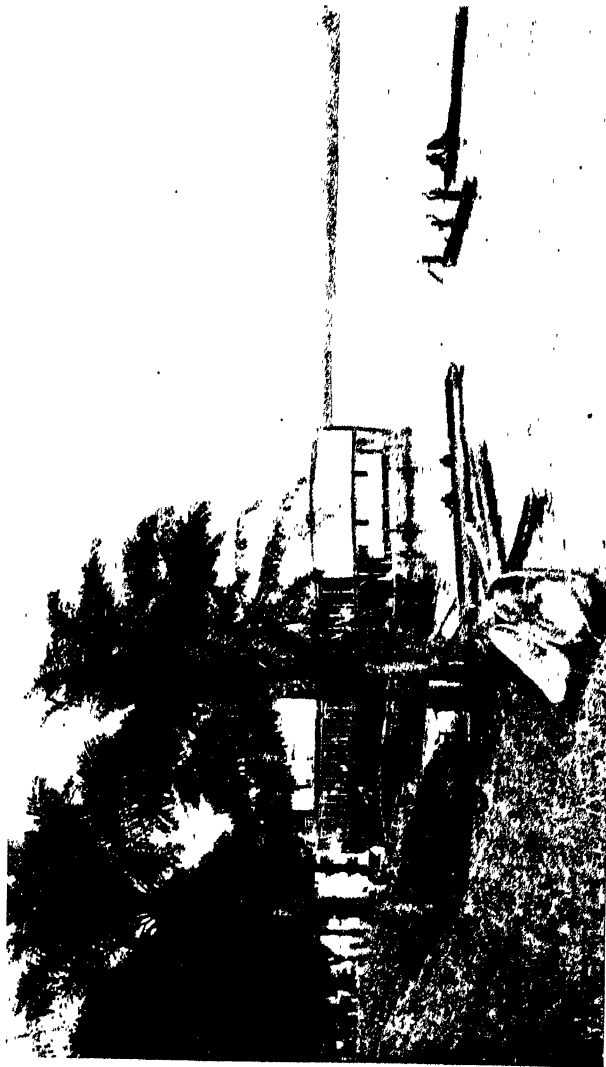
All river-craft in the Congo are stern-wheelers, thus permitting barges to be lashed on either side, and because of the numerous sand-bars with which the river abounds, on which steamers are some-

times stuck for days at a time. The cabins for Europeans are on the upper deck, upon which they open directly. These cubicles are so small, only about eight feet square, that it was utterly impossible for Mrs. Powell and me to dress at the same time, one of us perforce remaining in bed until the other had finished dressing. They are provided with electric lights and fans, however, though both cease functioning promptly at 9 P.M., after which hour the entire vessel is plunged in darkness. The *Tabora* had no interior arrangements, no reading, smoking, or dining saloons, the meals being served on deck, where the passenger spends all of his waking hours, for the box-like cabins are insufferably hot in the daytime. At the extreme after end of the upper deck were four primitive shower-baths, two for men and two for women, outside of which, in the early morning, was always to be found a long queue of sleepy-eyed, pajama-clad passengers patiently awaiting their turn.

The lower deck, where the great boilers are, is the domain of the black man and is crowded with fuel, cargo, and perspiring natives. The natives go ashore to sleep, for the steamer always ties up

at the bank for the night, the swift current and shifting sand-bars making navigation very dangerous in the darkness. Occasionally the tedium of the trip was relieved by a fight below decks, which was usually ended by a spanner in the hands of the chief engineer. Once we were aroused from our afternoon siestas by the blood-curdling shrieks of a native woman, who, it developed, was not being murdered but merely tattooed. And whenever we sighted a hippo or a crocodile, as frequently happened, the lower deck became a pandemonium of shouting, gesticulating natives. Amoni, who was very neat and clean and had always been accustomed to sleeping in the homes of his European employers, was frankly disgusted with the squalor which prevailed below decks and regarded his fellow-blacks as utter savages, in which he was not far wrong.

The skipper of a river-boat makes his own schedule, and as time is of no value in the Congo he stops and starts when he pleases. Captain Swenson of the *Tabora* was most obliging in this respect, and on several occasions stopped for some hours at places, not on his customary schedule, which we had expressed a desire to visit. The



THE "TABORA" NEAR STANLEYVILLE

Though the Congo is immensely wide it has numerous sand-bars, which make navigation by night highly dangerous, and so the river-steamers always tie up to the bank when darkness begins to fall.



fares on the Congo steamers are very low; if I remember rightly twenty dollars will pay for a first-class ticket from the Falls to Kinshasa, a distance of more than a thousand miles. This, of course, does not include the "chop," which is one of the captain's perquisites. It costs about a dollar a day and is not worth it. The captain lived in solitary state on the bridge, to which he was accustomed to invite us each day at twilight for "sundowners." The chief engineer, a Belgian, had a roomy and sumptuous cabin aft, which was shared by his fat black mistress. She was a noisy wench and when she really got going could completely drown out the chief's phonograph.

Our white fellow-passengers were mostly Belgians—officials, army officers, and traders, with a sprinkling of priests belonging to the great missionary orders—on their way home on leave after years of service in the Congo. The only foreigners, save ourselves, were a young English planter from Kenya Colony and a highly objectionable Jew from the Transvaal who had been allotted to the same cabin. This ill-assorted pair had a falling-out two days after leaving Stanleyville,

when the Jew insisted on bringing into the already crowded cabin a black girl whom he had picked up below decks. Another of the passengers was a young Belgian baron, returning to his home in Brussels after serving for several years as a *commissaire de district* in one of the outlying provinces. He had with him his mulatto daughter, a fascinating chocolate-colored child of four, to whom he was devoted. He was taking her to Belgium, he explained quite matter-of-factly, to be brought up by his wife. As Barton humorously observed, the baroness had probably asked her husband to bring her something special as a souvenir of his African sojourn.

Every European passenger had a native servant, and every servant save Amoni had an iron with which he spent his waking hours ruining his employer's clothing. When we wanted any laundry done—for clothes have to be washed daily in such a climate—Amoni would rent an iron from one of the other boys, but this led to so many quarrels that for the sake of peace I ordered the practice to be discontinued. After a long spell in such a climate one's nerves require smoothing more than one's clothes.



At frequent intervals along the navigable reaches of the Congo are wood-posts, at which the steamers stop to take on fuel. The wood is cut in four-foot lengths and stacked in cords or "brasses." As the Congo native has an ingrained aversion for work and will usually stay on a job only long enough to earn a month's supply of food, there is always a scarcity of wood-cutters and, consequently, a shortage of fuel. Hence the competition between the commanders of the river-steamers is very keen, and it is not uncommon for a captain to get his boat under way long before daybreak, with all the attendant dangers of running aground or piling up on a rock, in order to beat his rival to a wood-station.

The *capita* of one of these wood-posts was a dwarf, a chunky little fellow about four feet high, with a face like a black cherub and the biceps of a professional strong man. The way he handled his big gang of negro roustabouts, who behaved as though they were in deadly fear of incurring his displeasure, would have aroused the admiration and envy of an American boss stevedore. When Barton sought to take his picture he demanded five francs in advance, but when it had been paid him

he refused to pose until he had donned a set of garments that had evidently been discarded by some European. So the picture, so far as its local color went, was completely ruined.

As you glide for day after day down the Congo you become more and more awed by its majesty and grandeur. As long as from New York to San Francisco, and with a drainage area estimated at nearly a million and a half square miles, it is twice the size of the Mississippi, being surpassed in length only by the Nile and in width only by the Amazon. In places it is immensely broad, between Basoko and Nouvelle Anvers reaching a width of twenty-four miles from bank to bank; but the islands are so large and numerous—there are said to be upward of four thousand of them, one fifty miles long, between the Falls and the Pool—that the whole expanse is never seen at one time. Navigation is exceedingly hazardous, for in parts the river is only six feet deep; and, as the sand-banks are constantly shifting their position, steamers not infrequently spend a week or two hard and fast aground on some unsuspected shoal.

The color of the main stream of the Congo is





THE "CAPITA" OF THE WOOD-POST AT LISALA

He was a chunky little fellow about four feet high, with a face like a black cherub and the biceps of a professional strong man. He refused to pose until he had donned a set of European garments, so the picture, so far as its local color went, was completely ruined

a muddy brown, but below Nouvelle Anvers it is joined by several large tributaries—the Lulonga, the Busira, the Ubanghi, and the Kasai—each of which has a distinctive color: one black, one a grayish white, a third green, and another blue. Thenceforward, for many miles, the mighty torrent resembles a great striped pennant, the various longitudinal bands of color remaining clearly demarcated until the narrow gorge known as the Channel is reached, when they are all churned up together to a tint resembling that of a chocolate milk-shake.

The steamers, as I have before remarked, always tie up at night, when possible at a village, otherwise at any point on the bank where a landing can be effected. Because of the rapidity of the current it is an interesting and sometimes difficult proceeding, for it requires real seamanship to moor a vessel nearly three hundred feet long to the low and muddy bank of a swiftly flowing river. When within a hundred yards of the bank a naked sailor plunges overboard with a steel hawser looped about his neck. But a steel hawser is heavy, and he usually disappears several times before he reaches the shore. Once on land he secures his

line to a tree, the vessel is warped in, and the native passengers swarm ashore to spend the night, which is usually made sleepless for those remaining aboard by millions of bloodthirsty mosquitos, the shrieks and laughter of carousing blacks, and the rubadub roar of dance-drums. Promptly at nine o'clock the ship's bell sounds the signal for "Cease talking," the lights go out, and the passengers, their cigarettes glowing like fireflies in the darkness, draw their chairs up to the outer rail and watch the great, mysterious river sliding past.

We had expected the voyage down the Congo to be insufferably hot, but, as a matter of fact, the heat was never oppressive during the day save in the cabins and the evenings were delightful. The early mornings were, moreover, often bitterly raw, as I discovered when standing in line for the shower-bath clad only in my pajamas, while the cool breeze which always comes with sunset on the river made it necessary to sit down to dinner in a thick jacket or a sweater. Yet during the thousand-mile voyage from the Falls to Kinshasa we were never more than four degrees from the equator and crossed it twice.

I have traveled on most of the great rivers of the world, but the voyage down the Congo is infinitely the most fascinating, providing, as it does, a unique opportunity to see the strange life of Inner Africa, which unrolls before the traveler, as he sits at ease in his long chair, like a tremendous motion-picture film. Nor is there any of the monotony which makes most long river-journeys tiresome, for the people who dwell along the banks are of many different tribes, with wholly different characteristics and customs; and, as the steamers make frequent stops to take on passengers, cargo, and fuel, there is ample opportunity to go ashore and observe at close range the life and manners of the natives.

Incidents and episodes there were a plenty, some amusing, some exciting. At one village at which we touched, for example, my wife spied a tame leopard chained to the deck of a small steamer. At least its owner declared that it was tame. So she asked Barton to take a picture of her holding the beast, in emulation, she laughingly said, of Mrs. Martin Johnson. Somewhat reluctantly the owner handed her the chain, which she held gingerly, for it quickly became evident

that the big cat did not take kindly to strangers. It took some time properly to adjust and focus the camera, and the leopard resented being kept waiting.

"Bring him up a little closer," directed Barton. "Closer still. Now try to look as though you were enjoying it. There! Hold it! Hold it!"

But the leopard, which had been pacing back and forth at the end of its leash like an impatient suburbanite waiting for a train, abruptly grew tired of being held. Its tail straightened to the stiffness of a poker, the great muscles bunched themselves beneath the tawny skin like coiled springs, and it launched itself straight at the black box which it sensed as the cause of all the trouble, one claw-shod paw ripping away a corner of the camera and narrowly missing Barton. He got the picture of the leopard, but he was so flustered that all he caught of Mrs. Powell was her hand.

"After this," my wife said firmly, "my interest in leopards is going to be confined to those that have been tanned and made into coats."

Between the Falls and the Pool we stopped at an average of perhaps half a dozen stations a







THE FORT AT BASOKO

With its crenelated, whitewashed ramparts, its gateway flanked by turrets loopholed for musketry, it has a medieval appearance which is strangely incongruous in these equatorial wilds

day to take on passengers and cargo. These stations are all very much alike: a short stretch of hot, white road paralleling the river-bank and strung along it a few bungalows and a row of factories, usually iron-roofed, wooden shacks. These factories are usually run by the agents of the great trading-companies, such as the Interfina, the Cominex, the Sedec, and the Beltexco; but there are nearly always one or two small trading-posts owned by Portuguese, shrewd and enterprising merchants who are to Equatoria what the Armenians are to the Near East. Near Bolenge is a post the entire personnel of which is American. The manager and his assistants were formerly officers in the United States Navy, and their white employees are all old man-o'-war's-men, so that the place has the atmosphere of an American naval station.

The first stop of importance below Stanleyville is at Basoko, a fortified post which was of great service to the Free State administration during the Arab wars. It is picturesquely situated at the confluence of the Aruwimi, its medieval towers and ramparts being in striking contrast to the radio-masts that tower above them. The garrison

consists of a considerable force of native *tirailleurs*, for Basoko is in the heart of the cannibal country, the center of a warlike and troublesome population. In the little cemetery may be seen the grave of one of the most remarkable figures the Dark Continent has ever known, George Grenfell, the English missionary-statesman. It is doubtful if any European has ever acquired so deep a knowledge of the African character as this indefatigable servant of the Lord, no less an authority than Sir Harry Johnston giving him second place in the ranks of African explorers, with Stanley first, and third place assigned to the German, Wissmann.

The only thing of interest about Bumba that I can recall is that it is one of the few places on the Congo where we saw any evidence of native art, the people of the district, who have acquired considerable skill as ivory-workers, offering for sale necklaces, brooches, bracelets, and, most characteristic and interesting of all, crudely carved crocodiles. Further down the river canoe-loads of natives came alongside to dispose of fantastic-looking spears, obviously manufactured for souvenirs, and at nearly all the river-towns we were

offered quaint bracelets made from the hairs of elephants' tails, which are reputed to bring good luck to the wearer. It was amusing to observe the eagerness with which the home-bound Belgians bought any souvenirs or curios that were offered; the competition was so keen that some of them made a practice of getting up before daylight when approaching the larger towns in order to have the first selection. As a matter of fact it is not easy for the traveler to spend much money in the Congo, for there is little worth buying, though I added some interesting specimens to my collection of blade weapons.

Coquilhatville, at the confluence of the Congo and the Ruki, perpetuates the name and fame of Captain Coquilhat, one of the most daring of the early Belgian soldier-explorers. It was originally known as Equatorville, being situated only about a minute north of the line. It is a trim, rather attractive little place with numerous factories, a bank (where they honored my letter of credit by giving me almost three-quarters of the prevailing rate of exchange), and a church that is really quite imposing. At Coquilhatville the women all wear European shoes, no matter how scanty the rest

of their clothing, while every man who aspires to any social standing whatsoever owns a pair of white duck trousers. Sunday is a great day here, for all the pious natives go to mass at half-past four in the morning, carrying their little stools with them. Coquilhatville was the only place in the Congo where we saw any horses, for the tsetse-fly makes it impossible to raise live stock save in the Kasai and the Katanga. Apparently the only domestic animals immune from the attacks of the big gray flies are dogs and goats.

At Coquilhatville there boarded the *Tabora* the most interesting man I met in Central Africa: Father Brandsma, the father superior of the mission maintained by the Priests of Mill Hill at Basankusu. This order, which was founded by the late Cardinal Vaughan, has its headquarters at Mill Hill in England. It is composed mainly of English and Dutch priests, some of them possessed of private means and all of them men of education and culture. Father Brandsma, who is a Hollander, has spent a long life in Kenya, Uganda, and the Congo, with which he is as familiar as most men are with their golf-courses. He speaks English with the accent of Piccadilly,



The river flows along like smooth dark glass between banks black with forest--the mysterious black forest of the Congo



The *Kigoma*, a great stern-wheeler, was built in America and bears a striking resemblance to the Mississippi River steamboats of a generation ago

DOWN THE CONGO





plays bridge like a member of the Portland Club, is one of the most fascinating raconteurs to whom I have ever listened, and has an extraordinary knowledge of the peoples, politics, and problems of Central Africa. Energetic, tactful, thoroughly informed, with a keen sense of humor and the courage of his convictions, he is a fine example of the missionary-statesman. To my numerous discussions with him, extending over a period of many weeks, much of the information in these pages is due. When I met him he was going back to Europe on leave of absence after a long term of service in the tall grass. I did not realize how long, however, until, while motoring with us in the Canary Islands, he remarked that it was the first time he had worn an overcoat in fourteen years.

A day's steam beyond Coquilhatville brought us to the mouth of the Ubanghi, the mighty river which, with its numerous tributaries, forms the colony's entire northeastern and northern frontier. From the point where it is joined by the Ubanghi onward to the sea the Congo is international in character. As far as Manyanga, a distance of half a thousand miles, it is bordered on

one side by the Belgian Congo and on the other by the enormous colony of French Equatorial Africa. And from Matadi to the Atlantic it again serves as an international boundary, separating Belgian territory from the Portuguese colony of Angola.

At Kwamouth, where the Congo is joined by the Kasai, the river narrows down to enter the Chenal, a narrow gorge, 125 miles long, between whose steep-faced banks, in places eight hundred feet high, the water pours like a mill-race. Gone now are the palm-fringed shores, the dense black forest; gone too the humidity and the heat, for the breeze which sweeps up through the funnel formed by the high banks is distinctly chilly, sometimes almost cold. But soon the precipitous shores give way to grassy plains which run back to foot-hills with picturesque purple peaks rising dimly beyond, some of them rising three thousand feet into the African blue. And then, quite suddenly, the rushing torrent which has borne us across half a continent debouches into a great lake, fourteen miles broad and twenty long, its surface broken by many islands. Along its northern bank runs a steep, chalk-white escarp-

ment named doubtless by some homesick Englishman, the Cliffs of Dover. Our long river journey, which had seemed so interminable when traced upon the map, is at an end, for this is Stanley Pool.

## CHAPTER XVI

### PROBLEMS AT THE POOL

THE hull of the *Tabora* had scarcely creaked against the wharf at Kinshasa before half her European passengers had scrambled over the rail and were stampeding up the hill to make certain of securing accommodation at the A.B.C. hotel. A.B.C., it should be explained, is the local term for the Société Anonyme d'Alimentation du Bas Congo, a great trading-corporation which, in addition to its varied commercial activities, maintains hotels at Kinshasa, Thysville, and Matadi.

Unless you are a government official, or are connected with one of the eighteen great trading-companies which virtually control the industries of the Congo, you stand about as much chance of getting a room at one of these hotels as of buying two front-row seats for the "Ziegfeld Follies" at the box-office on Saturday night. I knew nothing of this, however, and, having taken the precaution to telegraph for reservations from Stanleyville,



THE CAMERA KID

When Barton gave him permission to tote the heavy camera he became the most envied boy in the village. He was as proud as the American youngster who is permitted to lug water for the elephants at the circus



a thousand miles up river, I saw no reason for undue haste in that appalling heat and took my time about going ashore. But when I gave my name at the reception-desk the supercilious young room-clerk, instead of tossing the keys upon the counter and calling "Front!" regarded me with a glassy eye.

"I wired you for rooms from the Falls," I said jauntily. "I should like them overlooking the Pool, if possible, with private baths of course."

"Do you belong to the H.C.B.?" he demanded, frosty as a winter's morning in the arctic.

I told him that I had no connection with the great corporation controlled by Lord Leverhulme.

"To the Interfina?"

"No."

"To the Sonatra?"

"No."

"To the Grands Lacs?"

"No."

"The Forminiere?"

"No."

"The Citas?"

"No."

"Then what company do you belong to?" he asked irritably.

Still failing to see the point of this curious interrogatory, I assured him that I did not belong to any company, that I was merely a traveling American.

"Then you can't get a room here," was the brusque answer. "The employees of the big companies have the first call on our rooms, and we already have twice as many requests for reservations from them as we can take care of. Some of our rooms have been booked for as much as six months by people going home on the next steamer."

Throughout our long journey across the continent we had eagerly looked forward to the comforts of a civilized hotel, with real beds and bathtubs and electric lights and clean table-cloths and the things that go with them. To thus have the gates of heaven slammed in our faces was disheartening. Then I bethought myself of a circular letter of introduction which had been given me in Brussels by the chairman of the most powerful of all the corporations doing business in the Congo. It was not a request but a command, and



the name signed to it was one to conjure with in Belgian Africa. I lost no time in presenting it.

"Ah, this is quite different," said the clerk, suddenly become obsequious. "I feel quite certain that we shall be able to find something for you."

And he did.

I have related the incident not because it is of any importance in itself, but by way of warning to those who may contemplate visiting the Congo, where hotel accommodations of any kind are very scarce and are usually engaged many months in advance by state officials and the employees of the numerous commercial organizations. I would strongly advise any one going out to the Congo to provide himself beforehand with numerous letters of introduction, for they may well mean the difference between sleeping in a decent hotel or in a squalid Portuguese lodging-house, between obtaining a cabin on a fast river-boat or spending weeks perhaps at some lonely outpost waiting for the next steamer. Unlike America and Europe, where the traveler can usually obtain almost anything if he is willing to pay enough for it, mere wealth is of little avail in the Congo. In smooth-

ing a path through the colony, bank-notes are not nearly as useful as the backing of the Government or of Big Business.

By glancing at the map of Africa you will see that the Belgian Congo is shaped like a chemist's retort, a large, round vessel with a tubulated neck. The slender neck of that vessel is obstructed, however, by the two hundred and fifty miles of cataracts and rapids which render the river impassable between Matadi and Kinshasa. Hence, though there are more than twelve thousand miles of navigable streams in the colony, all of which eventually flow into the Congo, westward navigation abruptly ends at Stanley Pool.

In the early days of the Free State, Henry M. Stanley asserted that the colony would be worthless commercially until the Congo should be linked up with the sea by an artificial transportation system. Whereupon King Leopold of Belgium, who recognized sound advice when he heard it and was always prompt to act upon it, caused a narrow-gage railway to be constructed at enormous cost and sacrifice—all of which, however, proved to be justified—from Matadi, which is the





THE TAXI OF KINSHASA: A "MONO-POUSSE"

It is a cross between a bicycle and a wheelbarrow: a seat just large enough for one person slung over a single rubber-tired wheel, with shafts fore and aft between which trot sweating natives

head of deep-sea navigation, to Stanley Pool. Thus, every passenger, every ton of freight bound for the interior, must be transhipped at Kinshasa. It is the Grand Central Terminal for all the vast territory included in the Congo Basin. Here every one must change from train to boat or from boat to train. There is no other way.

It will be obvious to any one that a country like the Congo, with an area of nine hundred thousand square miles, can make no real commercial progress until it is provided with an adequate highway to the salt water, for the little narrow-gage railway is ridiculously unequal to the task. Unless this condition is quickly remedied the young colony will be choked to death. When I was there the congestion was appalling. Not only the docks and freight-yards at Matadi and Kinshasa, but the wharves for a distance of nearly two thousand miles up river, were piled high with goods awaiting shipment, some of which, I was told, had been lying there for months. Indeed, the country was suffering from a complete if temporary industrial paralysis, for the Government had declared an embargo on further shipments until the congestion was relieved.

Of course if the channel of the Lower Congo could be cleared of its obstructions, thereby making the river navigable right down to the sea, the colony's greatest problem would be solved. To accomplish this various schemes have been suggested; one for blasting out the obstructions in the channel, another for building a canal. Though I understand that the project is entirely feasible from the engineering point of view, its cost would be enormous on account of the climate and the nature of the soil. It has been stated that the late Lord Leverhulme, whose vast interests in the Congo demanded better transportation facilities, offered to undertake the task himself, but for some reason his terms were not acceptable to the Belgian Government. The state is doing the next best thing to improve conditions, however, having recently commenced to double-track the railway.

Because of its being both at the end of steel and at the head of river navigation, Kinshasa is the commercial capital of the Congo, and, when the imposing government buildings now in course of construction near the city are completed, it will be the political capital as well, for it has been decided to transfer the seat of government from Boma.

Kinshasa's rise is as astonishing as it is fortuitous, for it was originally planned to establish the colonial metropolis ten miles further west, at Leopoldville, which was founded by Stanley in the early eighties. Leopoldville is charmingly situated at the western extremity of Stanley Pool, commanding superb views of the river, the cataracts, the forest, and the mountains. But commerce, ignoring the elaborate plans of the government engineers, fixed on Kinshasa, which, until a few years ago, consisted of a collection of wharves, warehouses, and trading-posts built on a sun-swept slope along the southern edge of the Pool. To-day Leopoldville is almost deserted, its handsome avenues overgrown with grass and its buildings falling into decay, while Kinshasa is as up and doing as a Western boom town.

On account of its mushroom growth, Kinshasa presents many curious contrasts. It has a few broad, well-shaded streets, lined with handsome residences, but these quickly run out in straggling roads and lanes, some of them ankle-deep in sand, while pretentious banks, office-buildings, and commercial houses stand cheek by jowl with shacks and shanties having corrugated iron roofs and unpainted wooden walls. You enter an up-to-the-

minute store with tiled floors and glass counters and nickeled fittings, which would do credit to Sioux City or Terre Haute, and, if you do not succeed in finding the article of which you are in search, you go next door, to a rough and ready frontier trading-post, where the merchandise is displayed on planks supported on sawhorses.

The casual, straggling appearance of the town is accentuated by the great number of vacant lots which are being held by real-estate speculators in anticipation of a sharp rise in prices when the land boom sets in which is expected to follow the transfer of the capital from Boma. It is said, however, that the speculators have already made enormous profits, for the price of property has increased several hundred per cent in the last half-dozen years and is still rising. With the completion of the projected railway to the rich copper-mining districts of the Katanga, which will shorten the journey to British South Africa by many days, Kinshasa's importance will be enormously increased and real-estate values will soar still higher.

For a town with so small a population the distances are very great, which, with the intense heat,



makes it very tiring to get about on foot. Though motor-cars are plentiful, few of them are for hire, and there are no horse-drawn vehicles, so that one must either walk or use a rickshaw or a *monopousse*. The only other place where the *monopousse* is found, so far as I am aware, is in Madagascar. It is a curious contrivance, a cross between a bicycle and a wheelbarrow with two sets of handles. Slung over a single rubber-tired wheel is a narrow seat, just wide enough for one person. Projecting fore and aft are shafts between which trot sweating natives, one pulling and the other pushing. Sometimes the vehicle is provided with a folding canvas hood, like a miniature buggy-top, which can be raised to protect the occupant from the sun. On a smooth road it is rather a pleasant form of conveyance, and when they are so minded the coolies make astonishingly good time.

Amoni did not like Kinshasa. He was impressed by the size of the hotel, which was the first three-story building he had ever set eyes on, but he resented being compelled to seek lodgings in the native town, three miles away, instead of being permitted to roll himself up in his blanket

and sleep on the gallery outside my door, as house-servants are accustomed to do in most parts of Africa. But what ruffled him most was the indignity of being compelled to shoulder his own "box," as he called the wooden chest in which he carried his clothing, cooking-utensils, sleeping-mat, and other belongings, for, being a head boy, he was not accustomed to perform heavy labor and resented it as much as a butler would resent being ordered to wash the windows. And his cup of trouble overflowed when, upon coming into town at night to see the sights, he was arrested by the police for being unable to produce a pass and for not carrying a lighted lantern.

"I not like this place, *bwana*," he confided to me the next morning. "Congo boys they ver' rude. They hab no proper respect for highly educated boy from him Britannic Majesty's dominions."

A friend up river had given me a letter of introduction to the manager of an American trading-company in Kinshasa. When the latter learned that we were staying at the hotel he took pity on us and invited us to his home for dinner. It was the first really civilized meal that we had had in

months, and we showed unmistakably if gluttonously that we enjoyed it. One of the guests was a young American who was engaged in the button business. He was leaving shortly on an expedition up one of the northern rivers—the Ubanghi, if I remember rightly—in search of the shells from which mother-of-pearl buttons are made. His beautiful young wife had been secretary to Carl Akeley of the American Museum of Natural History and with him had shot and photographed big game over the greater part of Equatorial Africa.

Our host had just received a consignment of phonograph records, and after dinner we sat around the library table listening to the latest jazz selections by George Cohan and Irving Berlin and poring over a pile of three-months-old American magazines. Had it not been for the white mess-jackets and the mosquito-boots we might have been spending the evening at a house on the Hudson instead of on the Congo.

“Suppose we take a little spin in the car before I drop you at the hotel,” our host suggested when the party finally broke up. “It’s a gorgeous night, and the road is fairly good as far as Leo.”

“Leo,” perhaps I should explain, is the abbreviation commonly used in the Congo for Leopoldville.

It *was* a gorgeous night. The air was soft and cool, as on a June evening at home; high in the star-studded, purple velvet sky, swung a gibbous moon; the indescribable, characteristic smell of Africa was over everything. Leopoldville, a sleepy, half-deserted town by day, is a place of mystery and fascination by moonlight, for the dusty avenues, athwart which the shifting shadows of the mangos fall, become strips of silver lace; the whitewashed buildings, harsh and glaring beneath the sun, are as soft as though carved from ivory; the weed-grown gardens are heavy with the fragrance of frangipani and hibiscus; and a gentle night breeze from the river sets the palm-fronds astir with ghostly whispers.

The illuminated clock on the instrument-board showed that it was long past midnight when we at length turned toward Kinshasa. We were driving slowly in order to enjoy the splendor of the night when from the dense undergrowth which fringed the road a great spotted cat sprang directly into our path. Blinded by the glare of our



IN THE FRENCH CONGO ; BUILDING A PIROGUE

The natives of the Belgian Congo make their canoes from the trunks of forest trees, but in French territory they are fabricated from innumerable small pieces of wood cunningly joined together



lamps, it crouched there, snarling. Now, it is one thing to encounter a leopard when you are in the jungle, a rifle in your hands, but it is quite another matter to meet one when you are unarmed and in evening-dress, returning from a dinner-party. Moreover, one never knows with any certainty what a leopard is going to do. It may attack you with the utmost ferocity, or it may run from you like a frightened house-cat. But our host gave it no time to make a decision, for he jammed his foot down upon the accelerator, and the car leaped forward like a horse that feels the spur, the horn emitting a blast that would have drowned the trumpet of an elephant. Momentarily paralyzed by the sudden roar of the motor and the pair of monstrous yellow eyes bearing down on it at express-train speed, the beast stood for an instant rooted in its tracks, then sprang for the bush, but not until we were so close that one front wheel actually grazed its tail. The episode served to remind us that, despite Kinshasa's veneer of civilization, we were still in Africa.

On the western shore of Stanley Pool, three quarters of an hour by steam ferry from Kin-

shasa, is Brazzaville, capital of the French colony of Moyen Congo, which is, in turn, a subdivision of the vast territory known as French Equatorial Africa, which stretches from the Atlantic eastward to the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, from the Congo-Ubanghi northward to the borders of the Sahara.

I was eager to see Brazzaville not only because it is the capital of what will one day be a rich and important colony but because I wished to compare it with the towns we had visited on the Belgian side of the river. From the ferry-station, where the visitor is subjected to a perfunctory customs examination, to Brazzaville itself is a distance of about three miles, the trip being made in *mono-pousses*. Built on a low plateau that commands a fine view of the Pool and the lower river, it is a pretty enough little town, clean and orderly but quite uninteresting. It has the inevitable Grand Place, which is to a French community what a common is to a town in New England; the usual factories—though the signs of the great trading-companies to which we had become so accustomed on the Belgian side of the river were conspicuous by their absence; numerous

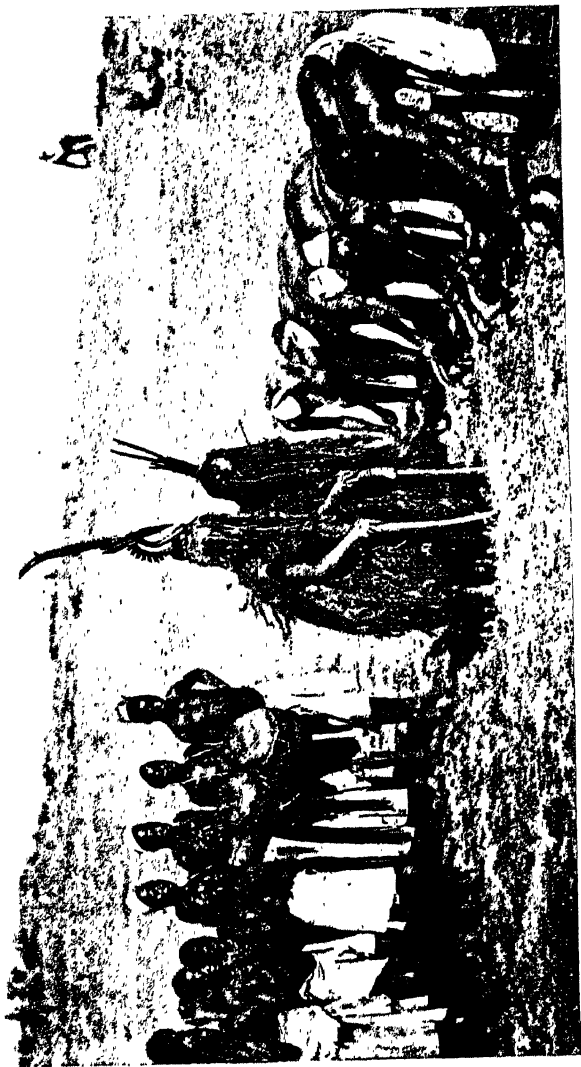


white-walled, red-roofed, deep-verandaed government offices of the type common throughout Equatoria; and a rather pretentious *palais du gouverneur* set in a fine and spacious garden. Beyond these there is nothing to see.

France's great equatorial possession is a treasure-house packed with natural riches. But the treasure-house has no door. In order to understand this extraordinary and difficult situation it is necessary to study the map. It will be seen that from Manyanga, a river-town about a hundred miles below Brazzaville, right away to the borders of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, a distance of approximately two thousand miles, the two great colonies, Belgian and French, are separated by a river-system common to them both—the Congo-Ubanghi-Bomu. But, so far as providing a highway to the salt water is concerned, this mighty river-road, larger than the Mississippi-Missouri, is equally useless to both colonies, for, as I have already explained in this chapter, its lower course is blocked by an impassable barrier of cataracts and rapids. The Belgians have overcome the handicap to a certain extent by building a railway around the rapids. And by this Belgian rail-

way must be transported every passenger, every ton of goods, entering or leaving the interior of the French colony. But, as I have already pointed out, the Matadi-Stanley Pool railway is utterly inadequate for the needs of the Belgians themselves, let alone the requirements of their French neighbors. French Equatorial Africa has several seaports, it is true—Loanga, Libreville, and Duala are the most important—but those ports are not connected with the far interior either by rail or by river. Perhaps the immensity of the problem with which France is confronted in Equatoria will become more apparent when I mention that the distance across the colony, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Sudan border, is equivalent to that from New York to Salt Lake City.

Thus it comes about that while business is brisk on the Belgian side of the river, and will become still brisker when the double-tracking of the line from the Pool to Matadi is completed, trade is all but dead on the French side, vast quantities of rubber, ivory, palm-oil, cotton, copper—commodities which would be equivalent to gold could they be set down in France—awaiting the day when some means of moving them easily and



AN APPEAL TO CERES

Medicine-men of the French Congo performing a ceremony designed to bring good crops



cheaply is provided. And the only means is an iron highway. This explains why a long succession of colonial ministers have been pleading with the French Parliament for an appropriation to construct a railway from Brazzaville to the coast at Loango, or, rather, to complete the line which has already been pushed as far inland as Minduli.

The situation has been well summed up by a former governor-general of the French Congo, M. Antonetti:

There is one problem in Equatorial Africa which dominates all other problems. Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that there is only one problem, because all the others are ramifications of the railway problem. For fifty years the question has led us in a vicious circle: Equatorial Africa can develop only when it can export; it can export only when it possesses a railway; and it will only have a railway when it can find the money to build one. An immense reservoir of raw materials is awaiting the moment when this artificial substitute for the Congo can be opened.

It is a matter for profound astonishment that the vast wealth of French Equatorial Africa, one of the richest colonies on the continent, should so long have remained untapped, dormant, for

lack of a two-hundred-mile-long railway. It is still more difficult to understand when one remembers that there has long been a saying in Africa that the first thing the British build in their colonies is a custom-house, the first thing the Germans build is a fort, the first thing that the French build is a railway.

## CHAPTER XVII

KWAHERI, BWANA! KWAHERI!

**T**HE sole means of egress from the Belgian Congo to the outside world is provided by the Chemin de Fer du Congo Matadi-Stanley Pool, a steel highway two hundred and fifty miles long and twenty-nine and one half inches wide. Though the first spike was driven in 1890, the last rail was not laid until nearly the end of the century, and it is said that every kilometer cost a white life and every meter a black one. The graves of the native workers have long since been swallowed up by the voracious jungle, but the resting-places of the Europeans are marked by white crosses or wooden headboards which form a picket-fence of death along this slender corridor of empire.

As trains do not run at night in the Congo, the journey from Kinshasa to Matadi takes two long, hot, and dusty days. The toy train consists of two box-cars for luggage, a coach which is first-class only in name, and several semi-open car-

riages for natives, hauled by a tin-pot locomotive which reminded me of the ancient engine on exhibition in the Grand Central Terminal in New York. When it could not make the grades, which frequently happened, it would back up to get a running start and try again and, if this attempt proved unsuccessful, would take the train up in sections.

Even before starting from the East Coast friends had warned us that the most uncomfortable part of the whole transcontinental journey was the comparatively short stage between Kinshasa and Matadi. Nor, as it proved, were they exaggerating. The decrepit coach, no larger than one of the horse-drawn street-cars so familiar to the last generation of Americans, was crowded to suffocation with homeward-bound officials, their families, and their numerous and varied belongings—trunks, bags, suit-cases, hampers, bedding-rolls, chop-boxes, bath-tubs, filters, folding-chairs, rifles, bundles of spears and other souvenirs, elephant-tusks, a police-dog, a monkey, two parrots, and a child with the whooping-cough. The sun beat down upon the roof of the carriage until the crowded interior attained the







IN THE FRENCH CONGO  
Natives performing the "rifle dance"

temperature of a blast-furnace and the humidity of a steam-room in a Turkish bath. Men growled, babies yowled, the dog howled. The air was heavy with the mingled odors of tobacco, moldy leather, cheap perfume, insect-powder, garlic, sausage, whisky, tepid beer, and perspiration. The ramshackle carriage shook and quivered like a shimmy-dancer. Sparks from the wood-burning locomotive burned our garments until they were as full of holes as a piece of Madeira table-linen. Our faces were covered with a thick layer of dust and soot, through which the rivulets of sweat trickled in miniature cañons. As the entrance to the wash-room was blocked by piles of luggage, the train-sick children used the platform.

We started from Kinshasa shortly after day-break, but, on account of numerous delays and breakdowns, we did not pull into Thysville, where the night is spent, until long after darkness had fallen. Thysville, named after General Albert Thys, who was one of Leopold's officials and built the railway, stands on a high plateau in a savannah region, which is broken by alternate stretches of forest and moorland, like all the country along the line. Nobody stays in the train. Swarms of

boys are in waiting to carry the passengers' baggage up to the hotel and to steal it if opportunity offers.

The A.B.C. hotel is a large, two-story structure with broad verandas running right around each floor, upon which the windowless bedrooms open. It is under the same management as the hotels at Kinshasa and Matadi, and like them it seldom has accommodation, especially toward steamer-day, for passengers who are not government officials or employees of one of the big industrial corporations. I had wired for rooms a week in advance, but when I at last succeeded in pushing my way through the importunate throng which surrounded the harassed manager I found that there was nothing for us. Everything had been taken. Exhausted passengers were even making preparations to sleep on the tables in the dining-room.

Even in America, where there are taxicabs and policemen and electric lights, it is not pleasant to be compelled to set out late at night, after a long and tiring journey, to seek rooms in a strange city. The joys of such an experience in an unpaved, unlighted town in Equatorial Africa may,

therefore, be left to the imagination. Amoni went ahead swinging his lantern, for the streets of Thysville are full of holes, and the incautious pedestrian stands a chance of breaking his neck, while Mrs. Powell, Barton, and I stumbled along in his wake with the luggage, which it was not safe to leave unguarded, even in the hotel, for fear of thieves.

After an hour of aimless tramping up one rough, dark lane and down another we were cheered by the sight of a house with lighted windows. It was as welcome as is a beacon to a fog-bound mariner. Within, beside a lamp-lit table, an elderly couple sat reading. Feeling like a tramp, I knocked and asked for a night's lodging. The householder and his wife, who proved to be Baptist missionaries, told us to come right in. We spent the night under their roof, Barton on a sofa in the library, Mrs. Powell and I in the only spare bedroom, while Amoni was taken care of by the servants in the compound.

Though the sun was high in the cloudless blue when we awoke, the mountain air was almost cool in spite of the fact that Thysville is within a few degrees of the equator. Coming from the miasmatic

swamps and steaming jungles of the upper river, a draft of it was as exhilarating as a glass of champagne. By this time we had begun to feel the effects of our long journey, so, upon learning that the next train, three days later, would set us down in Matadi in ample time for the steamer, we decided to spend the interim in Thysville, for there was ample accommodation in the hotel after the departure of the train. As native servants are not permitted to sleep on the premises of the A.B.C. hotels, Amoni expressed a wish to remain at the mission instead of seeking quarters in the native town. To this arrangement the missionary made no objection. As the following day was Sunday, I suggested to Amoni that he had better attend service at the little mission church in order to gratify his hosts. So he put on a clean shirt and washed his only pair of trousers, for garments dry in thirty minutes when exposed to the African sun. Two hours later he returned smiling.

"Have you been to church, Amoni?" I asked him.

"Yes, indeed, *bwana*," he answered proudly. "I lead the singing. That miss'nary *bwana* he

say I hab ver' fine soapy voice. When they do pass the plate dem Congo boys only put in coppers but I put in shilling. The memsahib she tell me that I set ver' fine example, that I true child of Jesus."

Despite our unfavorable first impression, Thysville proved to be a really charming little town, well kept and clean, with a delightful climate. In fact, it is much frequented as a health-resort by the Europeans stationed in the fever-stricken lowlands of the Bas Congo. We passed the days readily enough by taking long walks in the surrounding country—after the oppressive heat of the upper river it was as novel as it was delightful to feel the need of a coat—and in superintending the carving of ivory souvenirs and the tying of numerous elephant-hair bracelets for our friends at home. Sleep was out of the question, however, for the nights were made hideous by the shrieking of the engines in the railway-yards at the foot of the hotel gardens. I was told that each engineer has a native assistant whose sole duty is to blow the whistle, and he does it continuously and well. But we were more than recompensed for such minor annoyances by the delights

of standing on the upper balcony in the clear, crisp air of early morning and watching the eastern sky turn from purple to gray, to crimson, to cobalt, before the oncoming sun. Indeed, I know of few thrills to equal that of daybreak in the African highlands, when the cool and starry night merges into the reddening dawn. It is like getting up in December to breakfast in June.

From Thysville all the way down to Matadi the railway runs through very mountainous country, with steep descents and many hair-pin turns. The journey is as thrilling as a ride on the switchback at Coney Island, for one moment the train plunges into a tropic forest, where the trees stand so close to the metals that their leaves brush the windows of the carriages, the next it skirts the edge of a dizzy precipice which drops away from the outer wheels fifty fathoms sheer or goes tearing down a rocky gorge between whose towering walls the shriek of the locomotive rises like the wail of a lost soul. It is an engineering marvel that the line was built through such a country at all. It might be said, indeed, that the rails were laid on human bones, for before the railway-builders came all merchandise destined for the interior had to be



carried in sixty-pound loads from Matadi to Stanley Pool on the heads of native porters. By reason of heat, disease, and exhaustion the mortality among the porters was appalling, for it is said that ten thousand men a year died on the trail, literally in their tracks.

For the last few miles down to Matadi the railway is built along a narrow shelf blasted from the rocky wall of a magnificent gorge, with the dark torrent of the Congo swirling along hundreds of feet below. Our engineer, eager to reach his destination, opened wide the throttle and released the brakes, permitting the train to plunge down the steep gradients and take the sharp curves at breakneck speed, the little coaches rocking and swaying drunkenly. Amoni was frankly terrified, and I wondered if the premiums on my war-risk insurance had been paid up to date.

If you will look from the right-hand window of the train four miles before reaching Matadi you will see a tremendous boulder rising abruptly from the river's bank. It is known as Portuguese Rock, so named because, cut high in its face, are the arms and crown of Portugal, together with an inscription which commemorates one of the

very early European expeditions—in all probability the first—to ascend the Lower Congo. Translated, the inscription reads: “Hither arrived the ships of the fleet of Dom Joam the Second, King of Portugal—Dio Caõ, Pedro Anas, Pedro da Costa.” The date would be toward the end of the fifteenth century, probably about 1484, when the sea-power of Portugal was at its height and the sails of Portuguese caravels were to be seen on every sea-road of the world.

Matadi is built on a solid piece of granite—the name itself means “rock”—which, under the tropic sun, becomes as hot as the top of a stove at white heat. Before I went to the Congo I had always maintained that Tamatave, on the east coast of Madagascar, and Hit, on the Euphrates, were the hottest places on the globe, but before I had spent an hour in Matadi I changed my opinion. The inhabitants of the place have no need to speculate on the climate of the infernal regions. In most parts of the tropics there is some relief at nightfall, but the rock on which Matadi stands seems to retain the heat, so that between night and day there is little if any difference. The



SUNLIGHT AND SHADOW IN MATADI

Shade of any kind is at a premium, for the Congo's only seaport is built upon a sun-scorched granite rock and is as hot as the top of a stove at white heat



stones literally scorch one's feet. Metal objects exposed for a few minutes to the sun will burn the hand. The air is like a blast from the open door of a furnace. The European is in exceptional danger of sunstroke in Matadi, not only because of the extreme actinism of the sun's rays, which in this latitude are almost vertical, but because they are reflected by the rock underfoot into the eyes. Hence, tinted glasses are almost as essential to safety as a helmet.

Every spot in Matadi that will hold a house has one, which means that there are no gardens and few trees. The houses, generally of wood or whitewashed adobe with roofs of corrugated iron, cling to the precipitous hillside like those of Amalfi, but without the flowers, the color, or the picturesqueness. In the steepness of its streets, though in nothing else, the place reminded me of the hillier districts in Seattle and San Francisco. In fact, one is always climbing a hill or going down one. There is no level ground.

The entire waterfront is devoted to commercial purposes, a bustling, noisy, unlovely area crowded with wharves, railway-yards, and warehouses, which, when we were there, were piled high with

merchandise awaiting transportation to the interior, the congestion being so serious that the Government had placed an embargo on further shipments. Tied up to the wharves or at anchor in the stream were many merchant vessels—Belgian, British, American, Dutch, French, Danish, Norwegian, and a lone German. When the German boat put to sea the day after our arrival I noticed that the Belgian and French steamers in the port did not dip their colors. Upon making inquiries I learned that since the war the vessels of these two nations never salute or acknowledge the salutes of Germans. Yet considerably more than half a decade has elapsed since the signing of the Peace of Versailles.

Though we succeeded, after considerable difficulty and the use of all the influence I could command, in squeezing ourselves into the A.B.C. hotel, which was already overcrowded, the rooms assigned us, being situated between the toilets and the bar, were so odorous and noisy that when the local American missionary, Mr. Erickson, offered to put us up at the mission station, we accepted with gratitude and alacrity. The mission house at Matadi is in the outskirts of the town, a charm-

ing bungalow with dim, cool rooms and deep verandas, standing in the midst of a garden riotous with plants and flowers, high above the river. It was so quiet and peaceful within the walls of the compound that I could have remained there indefinitely and quite contentedly—or thought I could until I glimpsed above the tree-tops the gray hull and snowy decks of the *Anversville*, smoke curling from her funnels and the home-bound pennant at the fore.

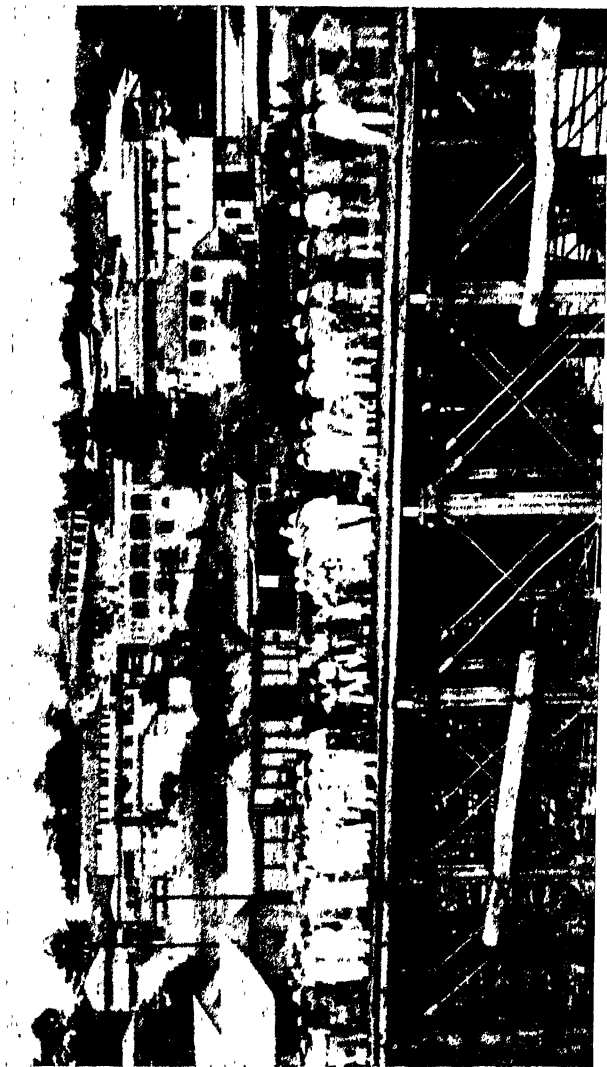
The faithful Amoni remained with us to the end, though he lost his cheerful smile as the sailing-hour drew near. While he was helping the stewards to arrange our belongings in the cabin his depression at leaving us was so great that he was hardly recognizable as the same bright and merry youngster who had followed us across the continent. Such was his devotion that had we consented I think he would have put his wife out of mind and accompanied us across the "big water." We presented him with the blankets and the lanterns and all the supplies that we had left and gave him enough money to make him a rich man among his own people and left him in charge of Erickson until he could find some European with

whom he could travel back to his home in Rhodesia. The last thing I saw as the *Anversville* swung into the stream and headed seaward was a flutter of white from the veranda of the mission station. It was Amoni waving a table-cloth in farewell. It almost seemed as though across the rapidly widening waters I could hear his thin voice calling:

“Kwaheri, bwana! Kwaheri!”

Our fellow-passengers on the *Anversville* formed a cross-section of the Congo, or, at any rate, of the colony's European element. There were *commissaires de district* and *administrateurs* in pipe-clayed topees bearing the gilt arms of Belgium and stiffly starched white linen; army officers in faded khaki, most of them wearing the blue ribbon of the Star of the Congo, which denotes many years of colonial service, and some of them the crimson *fourragere*; a government doctor who was returning to his Italian home to settle down after a long lifetime spent on the shores of Tanganyika; American and Canadian mining engineers from the copper-fields of the Katanga and the diamond-fields of the Kasai, lean,





*Courtesy of the Phelps-Stokes Fund*

THE BEST VIEW OF MATADI : FROM A DEPARTING STEAMER

Matadi is built on a hillside of solid granite, and every spot that will hold a house has one. Its heat is exceeded only by that of the internal regions



bronzed men with the tiny wrinkles about the eyes which come from years of staring across sun-swept spaces; the English manager of one of Lord Leverhulme's palm-oil enterprises; a group of grave-faced Swedish missionaries from the remotest districts of the French Congo; priests of the great Roman Catholic orders, bearded men with kindly eyes, in sun-hats and snowy cassocks; an ivory-hunter who had upward of a hundred notches filed on the barrel of his elephant-rifle; and numerous employees of the great trading-corporations, some of whom had traveled thousands of miles in *pirogues*, *tepoys*, or afoot in order to catch this steamer. There was scarcely one of them whose life-story was not an epic of romance and adventure, of devotion to duty and quiet heroism. Some of them had not been out of the bush in years; they marveled at the electric fans, the soft carpets, and the clean white beds in their cabins; they touched the glass and napery on the table gingerly and were frankly embarrassed by the unaccustomed array of forks and spoons. They wandered about the steamer as though dazed. To feel their feet actually upon her decks and the sea-breeze in their faces was to them the realization

of a dream. There was something pathetic in their happiness at going home, in the anxiety with which they clustered about the chart waiting for the posting of the day's run, in the yearning with which they strained their eyes seaward as though seeking those low, windmill-dotted dunes from which they had been gone so long and which many of them, doubtless, had thought at times that they would never see again.

But Africa is a jealous mistress, and those who have wooed her she does not readily let go. Long after the propellers of the *Anversville* had begun to churn the waters of the Congo into foam, long after the hot roofs of Matadi had dropped astern, the long arm of Africa reached out to snatch her recreant suitors. At daybreak of the morning after we left Matadi a young Belgian woman, who with her husband had traveled with us all the way from the Lualaba, died of fever. We buried her at Boma. Before Boma was out of sight a child died of dysentery. The steamer waited while its parents buried it in the little graveyard at Banana. And twelve hours out from Banana a young trader died from too much sun and rum. Him we buried at sea, with his country's flag for a shroud.

Boma is sixty miles below Matadi, the only feature of interest in this stretch of the Congo being the sharp turn in the channel at what is called the Devil's Caldron, where the water eddies and boils in whirlpools as though stirred with a mighty unseen spoon. Going down-stream through the Caldron is somewhat reminiscent of shooting the rapids on the St. Lawrence above Montreal, but steamers wishing to go up to Matadi must have a big reserve of power if they wish to get through, for the current at this point is so swift that small or poorly engined vessels are frequently unable to make headway against it.

Boma is the capital of the Belgian Congo and the seat of the governor-general. It is a dismal, depressing place, for it has no business and there are no signs of activity on its broad, tree-lined boulevards, its population being composed almost entirely of officials. Though attractively laid out, with many trim houses set in brilliant gardens, the heat and the humidity are most oppressive, and, so far as I could discover, there is no provision for recreation, such as one would find in the capital of a British colony. After visiting it I could understand why the American consulate had been transferred to Sao Paulo de Loanda, further down

the coast in Portuguese Angola. This action of the State Department has left the United States without any official representation whatsoever in the huge territory of the Congo and has caused considerable dissatisfaction among Belgians and Americans alike. Boma's present importance is only temporary, however, for upon completion of the administrative buildings now in course of construction on the shores of Stanley Pool, the seat of government will be transferred to Kinshasa, and Boma will be left to dwell in the memories of its past.

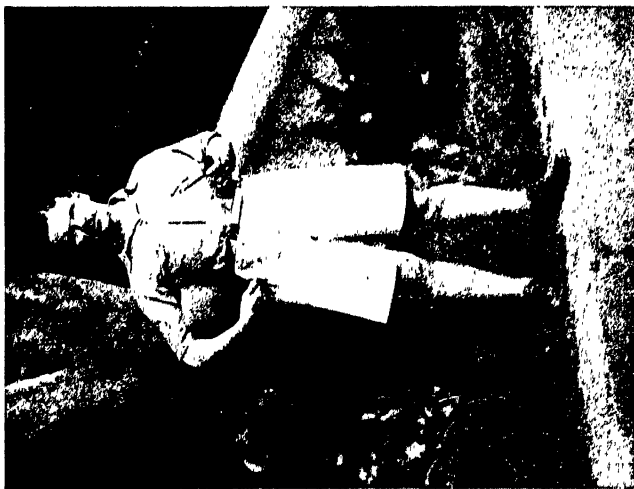
Time-expired officers are required to call on the governor-general in full uniform before leaving the country, a regulation which entails something of an ordeal in such a climate. It was a stifling day when we were there, with the mercury standing well above 100, but every military man on the *Anversville* had perforce to button himself into a high-collared, stiffly starched white uniform, don all his decorations—nearly every officer in the colony has anywhere from four to a dozen medals, stars, and crosses—and go trudging up the hill to pay his respects to King Albert's representative. Half of them were already invalids after





Mr. Barton

THE ARTIST AND THE AUTHOR



Colonel Powell



their three years of service in the colony, and I should have thought that that official call would have put the rest of them in the same category.

Having learned that we were aboard the *Anversville*, the governor-general and his beautiful young wife invited us to tea at the residency, where we arrived just as the perspiring and wilted officials were leaving. The building itself is by no means imposing, but it is superbly situated, and, with its broad terraces, sweeping drives, and beautiful gardens, its numerous servants in white and scarlet and the smart native sentries at the gates, it provides an attractive and dignified residence for the head of the Colonial Government. The governor-general was the highest type of official I met in the colony, an educated and polished gentleman who impressed me as having a genuine sympathy for the twelve million blacks intrusted to his guardianship and a thorough grasp of their problems.

As we were returning from the residency to the steamer we met a weary, pathetic little party toiling up the steep road that leads to the European cemetery. At its head paced a cassocked priest bearing a crucifix and flanked by two little

mulatto boys swinging censers. Then came a squad of native soldiers bearing on their brawny shoulders a cheap black coffin, quite destitute of flowers. It contained, I knew, the body of the young Belgian woman who had died the night before on shipboard. Bringing up the rear of the sorrowful little procession were but two mourners: the grief-stricken husband, his face white as his helmet, and, supporting him, Father Brandsma, the priest of Mill Hill. There is no florist in Boma, but earlier in the day my wife had begged permission to pick some flowers in the mission garden. They were already withered in that terrific heat, but I stepped forward and laid them on the casket, a tribute to one of Africa's humble martyrs. Then we drew back, and Barton and I stood with uncovered heads until cross and white-clad figures were lost to sight amid the trees that fringe the cemetery. So still, so breathless was the afternoon that the only sounds to be heard were the shuffle of the feet upon the dusty road and the racking sobs of the husband. . . .

It is forty miles from Boma to Banana and the open sea, but for a hundred miles after land has

been lost to sight the Atlantic is stained with the turbid waters of the Congo. Now our long journey was all but at an end. Swiftly and silently the river-banks slipped past our bows. Black and brooding forest, steaming jungle, mangrove swamps, sylvan bayous with sandy, palm-fringed shores, mysterious little rivers which led to God knows where, slim dugouts with naked black men chanting at the paddles, thatched fishing-huts perched high on stilts, quaint villages set in clearings with the smoke of wood-fires curling lazily above them, appeared as abruptly as on a motion-picture screen and then were lost astern. The mighty stream which had borne us across half a continent was unrolling its final panorama in farewell.

As we rounded the point at Banana and the steamer lifted to the South Atlantic swell as she turned her prow toward Europe and civilization, the velvety African night, with all the memories that it held for us, was settling down upon the land. The blood-red sun dropped suddenly behind the ocean's rim, and night followed like the turning out of a lamp. Away on our port bow a lighthouse on the Angola shore sprang into a

point of flame, and high above it swung the Southern Cross, a pale, faint constellation shaped like an ill-made kite. The last thing we saw was the white hospital rising amid the palm-trees. The last smell we caught was the heavy scent of crushed marigolds rising from the tawny river. The last sound we heard was the deep rubadub roar of a native drum which echoed across the miles of silent ocean, forest, and stream, sending who knows what strange message into the unknown. A grim land. A cruel land. But I fancy that there were many tear-wet faces among those that lined the rail, for those who know the Dark Continent love it and when away from it hanker unreasoningly to return.

There are millions who know nothing of your spell,  
And revile you for your cruelty and pain.

"Out in Africa," they say,  
"Men are lost and thrown away."

We know better, Mother Africa! your children come to  
stay,  
And they never scale the City Wall again.

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